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FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE "RECOGNITION" BY LADY TICHBORNE.

(*See the Story of the Tichborne Case.*)

Vol. VII.—No. 90.

The Tichborne Case.

Or the History of Arthur Orton, alias Thomas Castro, Claimant to the Estates and Baronetcy of Tichborne.

"Let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery."

—SHAKESPEARE, "Othello," Act I., Sc. 3.

PART II.

IT was now quite time that "Sir Roger" should go to England and press his claim in person; so, without waiting for the arrival of funds from his mother, he sailed for Europe on the "Panama," on the 2nd of September. Before leaving Australia he paid Cubitt and Gibbes with bills drawn on London banks, and purchased, on credit, the Metropolitan Hotel, Sydney, apparently intending to return thither when he had proved his right to his title, and take up his position as a publican, a mode of life far more to his taste than that of a county grandee.

While The Claimant was on his way to England a letter arrived at Sydney for Cubitt, containing a remittance of £400 to enable "Roger" to return to his mother and also giving a good deal of information which rather disconcerted the gentlemen who had been so closely mixed up with him for the previous few months. Among other things, the letter denied that the real Roger had ever had St. Vitus's dance, though Castro had said that on account of that disease he had been unable to follow the usual course of education. Also the dowager declared that she could not remember any brown mark on the side of her eldest son, nor did she seem quite clear as to the exact significance of the "Brighton Card Case," which Castro had mentioned to her as a proof of his identity. Again her later description of the lost lieutenant differed widely from the man as Cubitt and Gibbes knew him. Lieutenant Tichborne was just over five feet eight inches in height, and, as the new Roger was five feet ten, he must have grown. Added to this, the original Tichborne was a slight, delicate man, the new importation was burly, large-boned, and rapidly waxing unwieldy. In her first statement Lady Tichborne had made the mistake of saying that Roger's hair was light brown, whereas it was nearly black. This hardly agreed with the fair-haired Castro. However, it was too late to do anything then, so Cubitt and Gibbes waited to see if their "find" was recognised in England, and hoped for the best.

Travelling was a slow matter in the sixties, and it was not till the early morning of Christmas Day, 1866, that The Claimant and his wife and child reached London. At Bogle's suggestion the party went to Ford's Hotel, in Manchester Square, that being the place where the Tichborne family always stopped when in London.

The Dowager Lady Tichborne was in Paris, daily expecting news of her prodigal son, therefore, it is the least that one could expect that Roger should go off at once to see his mother, who had waited so patiently for him for so many years. But no. His first trip was one of an absolutely confidential nature, and was made in a cab. Of this we shall hear more at a later stage. His next move was to go down to Alresford, the village nearest to Tichborne House, where he stopped at the Swan, the principal inn in the place, under the name of R. C. Taylor.

He arrived there on the 28th of December, and when he had finished dinner sent a message to the landlord to ask him to join him over a bottle of wine and a cigar. This the landlord readily did, and the pair chatted till well into the night.

Now, the landlord's name was Rous, and he afterwards became a person of some prominence, so a word about him is necessary. Originally he was a clerk in the office of Mr. Hopkins, the solicitor who for years had managed the Tichborne affairs, but who had then retired. Rous was, therefore, well posted up in all that related to the Tichborne family, and had actually assisted in copying out the settlement which had been made at the time of Roger's coming of age. It did not take "Mr. Taylor" long to extract this much information from the landlord, whose tongue was easily loosened under the influence of the bottle of wine, and then the conversation turned on the Tichborne family.

On the following morning Rous drove Mr. Taylor round to Tichborne and left him while he walked about the place refreshing his memory with the scenes which he had never visited in his youth. Later that day The Claimant revealed himself to his astonished host as Sir Roger Tichborne. The news flew round the village like wildfire, and among the very first to hear it was Mr. Hopkins. That worthy at once sent over to a friend of his, a Mr. Baigent, a drawing master, and the two started off to see the new baronet. As they were strolling up the path leading to the inn a huge mountain of flesh, weighing well over twenty stone, passed them, but gave absolutely no sign of recognition. They knew from the description that they had received that the mountain was Roger returned, but they could not get a glimpse of his features on account of the wraps with which he was muffled up. On the other hand, as neither of them had altered much, and both had known him in his youth, they were surprised that he should not have greeted them. That same day Bogle arrived from London and was present on New Year's Day in the Tichborne chapel, his master, however, pious Catholic though

he was, did not put in an appearance in the family chapel, much to the surprise of those who had known him as a boy.

At this point we must interrupt our narrative for a few lines to explain what relations of Roger Tichborne were then living, as they play important parts in the rest of the story.

Sir Henry Tichborne, the seventh baronet, we have said, left four sons and a daughter. The daughter married a Mr. Nangle, and bore two sons and a daughter. Of Sir Henry's sons we have seen that the three eldest all enjoyed the baronetcy in turn and left children, while the youngest died childless.

Sir Henry Joseph, the eldest of the three brothers, left six daughters, all of whom married, becoming respectively Lady Dormer, Lady Arundel of Wardour, Mrs. Washington Hibbert, Mrs. Colonel Greenwood, Mrs. Townley, and Mrs. Matthew Higgins, wife of "Jacob Omnium," the well-known writer in the "Times" and "Pall Mall Gazette." Sir Edward's only child Kate we have heard of before, and remember that she became Mrs. Radcliffe. James's two children were Roger and Alfred; the latter was dead, The Claimant posed as the former. Lady Doughty was still alive, and her son-in-law, Mr. Radcliffe, knew Roger before he vanished.

On Roger's mother's side, old Mr. Seymour left two daughters living, Mrs. Bouverie and Lady Rawlinson, and his two sons, Henry and Alfred, were at that time Members of Parliament. All these people knew Roger well. The Seymours were really his half-uncles, but they had lived with Roger on terms of greatest intimacy, regarding each other as cousins, on account of that unfortunate blot on the Seymour escutcheon, to which we have alluded when mentioning James's marriage.

With all these people one would surely think that there would be no difficulty in recognising Roger even after the lapse of fourteen years. In spite of this, not one of the family was inclined to welcome Roger home. Of course, his advent would upset the family affairs terribly, but if they had for a moment regarded the possibility of his being alive as other than a delusion of the dowager's, they would have extended the hand of friendship to him at once. As it was, they all looked upon him as an impostor, who was humouring the poor mother's whim for his own gain.

However, to find out if The Claimant had really a claim, Mrs. Greenwood stopped Bogle after church on New Year's Day, and, after chatting to him and gratifying a wish of the old servant, sent a civil message by him to "Roger," asking him to come and see her at her house at Brookwood. Her wish was destined to be unfulfilled, as circumstances made it desirable for The Claimant to leave Alresford at once. The circumstances were these: Mr. Frederick Bowker, solicitor to Sir Alfred's widow, having heard that Sir Roger had returned, went to the Swan to see him in the interests of his client, for if the real Roger had turned up, the widow would have lost her jointure, and her little son would lose his inheritance as the baronet.

Mr. Bowker sent up his card, and asked for an interview, and, after much difficulty, was shown into The Claimant's presence. He found the gentleman busily studying a catalogue of the contents of Tichborne House. The interview was stormy, and he left the inn firmly convinced that he was dealing with an impostor. This made Alresford a little too warm for The Claimant, as he had not yet the authority of his mother's recognition to back him up, so he beat a hasty retreat to London, and thence to Gravesend, where he deposited his wife and child.

By now the dowager had heard that her son had arrived in London, and was anxiously expecting him, and as he did not come she wrote to him and entreated him to come over to Paris at once, promising him the money to pay for his Gravesend necessaries. Even then he did not feel quite equal to what he must have recognised as the crucial test, and lingered. In the billiard-room of a hotel he had met a man named Leete, and at once took him into his confidence, to the extent of asking his advice as to what he should do. Leete suggested that he should go across to Paris, but should take a solicitor with him, and as the baronet had not yet provided himself with an English lawyer, Leete kindly introduced him to Mr. John Holmes, a prosperous attorney, of the Poultry, to whom The Claimant put the case.

Among all those whom Roger Tichborne knew before he went to South America there was no one with whom he was on more intimate terms than with Mr. Gosford, with whom, we have seen, he left his private instructions in writing. Naturally, then, as soon as Mr. Gosford heard that his young master and friend had returned to claim his inheritance, he set out to find him at once. Gosford had fallen on evil times. While he was steward of Tichborne he had been allowed to place the rents of the estates to his own account and draw on them when he found it convenient to do so. Thus he had gradually got heavily into debt to the Tichborne property. During the reign of Alfred, the spendthrift, every farthing that could be extracted from the

Chatted well into the night.

property was wanted to support him in the style he lived in, and when the crash came, and the trustees were appointed, of course the money Gosford owed was regarded as a good asset, and he was called upon to refund at once. This he could not do, and so retired to a small house in Wales, where by practising the strictest economy he hoped to be able to pay off a little of his burden every year. We cannot, therefore, wonder that, when he saw a prospect of the trustees being supplanted by his old friend, he hailed his advent with joy, and was anxious to acknowledge him. At the first news of his arrival he set off for London, and, having obtained The Claimant's address from Bogle, Gosford went down to Gravesend, accompanied by a Mr. Cullington, who had joined the firm of Slaughter, solicitors, shortly after Roger had left for his tour.

They had to wait some time for The Claimant, who was out, but when he did arrive they had no difficulty in making out his outward form from the descriptions they had received, but could not see his face, as he was so muffled up. They called to him to stop, but the unwieldy mass lumbered past them, and, reaching his bedroom, locked himself in. They tried to coax him to come out,

but he would not. Finally their cards were taken in by a waiter, who returned with the following hastily-scrawled note:

"Pardon me, gentlemen, but i did not wish any one to know where i was staying with my family, And was much anoyed to see you all here."

This tasty little epistle horrified Gosford, and his heart sank within him, for he feared that he had to deal with an impostor, and his hopes of relief seemed as far off as ever. He was not to be put off, however, and wrote to The Claimant asking him to make an appointment to see him. After some trouble an interview was granted him in the presence of Mr. Holmes, Castro's new lawyer.

When he saw The Claimant he was sure that he was not Roger, whoever else he might be, but to test him asked him a few questions about his early days. "Roger" could not remember the names of his favourite dogs, had never heard of Slaughter, who had made his will, but remembered Cullington, who had not appeared on the scene during the lifetime of the real Roger, and when asked who had made his will answered, "Hopkins, of course."

So unsatisfactory was the result of his interview that Gosford at once telegraphed to his wife in the following terms: "Saw Sir Roger for an hour with his solicitor. Never saw the man before to the best of my belief. He cannot answer a single question of former times."

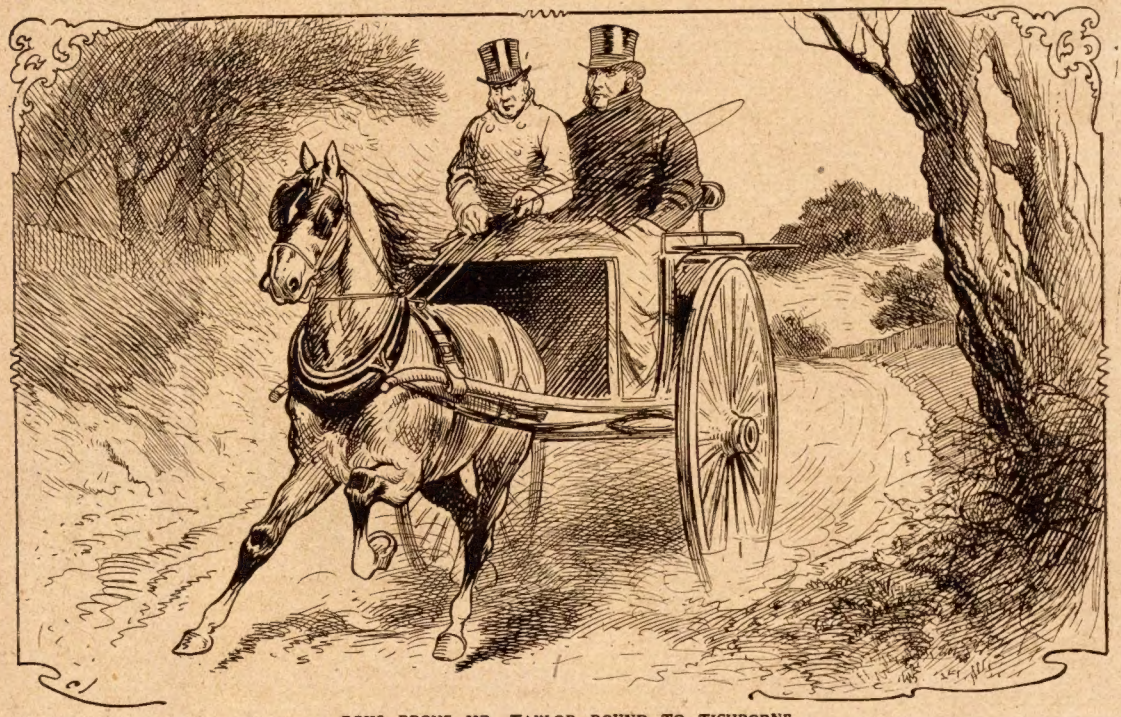
By now it was high time that the affectionate son should go to see his mother, and to prepare her for the meeting Sir Roger wrote to her one of his delicate little notes. It ran:

"DEAR AND BELOVED MAMMA,—I have been down to tichborne. And had a look at the dear old place once more. And it made my heart bleed to look at the destruction there has been made there, but has my poor Brother is dead we will not mension that subjek again let the past be past and no more about it. I have seen Mr. Gosford. he seems very much change to what he use to be. he came down in the train from Gravesend last night.. I had a long talk with him and he seems to deny every thing i put him in mind of. He says he do not remember me coming down in the coach from London with him to tichborne. I had a hour conversation with him about different things Mamma that nobody in the world could have told him but me. I even told him under what circumstances Moore came left me. You must remember Mamma i wrote him from allmost every place. A Cullington and a lot more would insist on seeing me at Gravesend when they came, and because I did not wish to see them until i had seen you they where very angry.

"I remain, your ever affectionate,

"Son, R. C. TICHBORNE."

Next day "Son R. C. Tichborne" set out for Paris, taking with him Holmes and his hotel acquaintance, Leete. As a contrast, Lady Tichborne had dismissed her legal adviser. She had made up her mind to acknowledge The Claimant as her son, and there can be little doubt that if he had been anyone short of a negro the poor woman would have seen in him the lost Roger.



ROUS DROVE MR. TAYLOR ROUND TO TICHBORNE.

The morning after The Claimant's arrival in Paris Lady Tichborne sent her Irish servant Coyne over to his hotel to bring him to her. Coyne went, but could only see Holmes and Leete, who told him that Sir Roger was too sea-sick to be seen. Then Paddy was despatched to bring Holmes and Leete to the dowager. They went readily enough, and she returned to the hotel with them.

The meeting between mother and son after fourteen years' separation was most pathetic. On the bed, fully dressed, with its face turned to the wall, lay an unresponsive mass. The lady looked at the back of the object, bent as far over him as her slight form would permit, and kissed him, saying: "He looks like his father, and his ears are like his uncle." That was all that passed at the memorable interview except that Holmes turned to Coyne and said, "You see how she had identified him. You witness that." Memories of the days when she dandled Roger on her knee and soothed his childish ailments overcame Lady Tichborne, and she sent at once for the Embassy physician, to whom she repeated that she recognised her long-lost child. Roger, however, was not much in need of the good doctor's

ministrations, and in a few hours had recovered sufficiently to eat well and to continue his quest for information. During the next week he was constantly with his mother refreshing his memory concerning incidents of which he was in blissful ignorance.

From the moment of the recognition of Roger by Lady Tichborne commences the legal portion of this history.

Holmes, acting for his client, wrote at once a letter to the "Times" newspaper announcing that Lady Tichborne had not the least hesitation in acknowledging The Claimant as her son Roger, and stating that he was prepared to take the customary steps to recover the estates and title for his client. A week later client and lawyer returned to London, the dowager announcing that she would shortly follow them.

A house was taken for Sir Roger near Croydon, where he was close to his solicitor, and a room set apart in it for his "Tichborne dictionary," Bogle. Before long the house, Essex Lodge, was full of parasites, who were only too pleased to recognise The Claimant as long as he would support them or promise to smile on them when he came into his possessions. To enable him to live in decent style until the legal matters were settled, the dowager allowed The Claimant £1,000 a year out of her jointure. Then the great battle began. Holmes started to set in motion the machinery of the Court of Chancery, and to this end countless affidavits were prepared and sworn to, and the collecting of these affidavits was one of the most important and secret of all the preliminaries of the cause célèbre.

The first gentleman to be convinced of the claims of our hero, if the case was to be in any way successful, was Mr. Hopkins. The old lawyer, as we have seen, made an attempt to see Sir Roger when he was staying at the Swan at Alresford as "Mr. Taylor," and though he had caught a glimpse of his figure, had not been able to see his features. Hopkins had quarrelled with the family since they had taken away from him their legal business, and would not have been sorry to see Roger oust them from their stronghold. To do this, of course, the real Roger must come to life, and, in the hopes that Lady Tichborne could not have made a mistake, Hopkins sent an invitation to The Claimant to dine with him.

We have had a specimen of the graceful manner in which The Claimant gave invitations; we now have a specimen of the unique manner in which he accepted them—two samples which certainly should be put into any "Complete Letter Writer." Here is the answer:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—you will no doubt think it strange that i did not call on you wen in Alresford. I should have done so with pleasure had I not been under a promise to Mamma not to converce with anybody i knew until i had seen her. i now know the reasons for her and am very glad i keeped my promice. i suppose you have heard how i have been served by Gosford and others since i have been away. i should not have gone to Alresford, only i thought nobody would know me as i had grown so stout, so i thought i would have a quite look round. i know you and Dr. lipscombe are old friends, so praps you will kindly tell him the reason i did not call on him likewise. if Mamma does not send for me to meet her most likely i will come down with Mr. Holmes to-morrow. hoping, my dear Hopkins, the old friendship that once existed between us may again be renewed and that I may have the pleasure of again receiving your advice how to act. I suppose you remember having heard of a Miss Bellow in ireland. Memo only. hoping to have the pleasure of meeting you before long,—I remain, yours faithfully, "R. C. D. TICHBORNE."

GAVE ABSOLUTELY NO SIGN OF RECOGNITION.

Now, is not that a pretty specimen? The calm assertion that he will come down if not better engaged is delightful, as is also his frankness to the very man whom he had always objected to and who was thought to be the one person whom he really disliked.

By way of being fully primed for his meeting with Hopkins, The Claimant invited Rous, landlord of the Alresford Inn, to spend the day with him at Croydon, and they travelled down together, accompanied by Holmes. The interview with Rous cannot have been without its use, for,

as a result of the dinner party, Hopkins unreservedly accepted The Claimant's statement that he was really Sir Roger Tichborne, and embodied his belief in an affidavit, in which he swears: "In a conversation of two or three hours' duration which I had with him on that occasion (i.e., the dinner), he evinced an intimate acquaintance with the state of the garden and grounds about Tichborne House before the alterations, since the year 1853; a knowledge of the name of a particular cottage at Tichborne and its inmates; of the names of his deceased uncles, and of their wives and families, and of various particulars relating to them; a perfect recollection of his being at my house in 1846, and the circumstances leading to it; a recollection of interviews with me when he was my client in 1849, 1850, 1851, and 1852. These and other facts which transpired in conversation satisfied me that he was, in fact, my old client, Mr. Roger Charles Tichborne."

At a later date it transpired that the "intimate knowledge" was nothing more than any man with a little intelligence and a good memory could have acquired in an hour's

The interview was stormy.

conversation with Mr. Hopkins's old clerk, Rous, and that no really private matter had been touched on.

Mr. Hopkins, once convinced, threw himself heart and soul into the suit of The Claimant, and wrote at once to Mr. Henry Danby Seymour, M.P., and to Lord Arundel of Wardour, stating his conviction that Roger was really returned. In his steps followed Mr. Baigent, who also became an ardent supporter of The Claimant.

Travelling seems to have impaired Roger's remembrance of the formulas of his religion, and he did not dare to show himself in any Roman Catholic Church until he had been coached up a bit in the customary routine of the services. When February 2, a Feast of Obligation on which Catholics were then obliged to attend service, came round, The Claimant feigned illness and stayed at home. Thus he disappointed numerous of his relatives, who were very anxious to catch a glimpse of him. Among these was Mrs. Greenwood, who had invited him to call on her on New Year's Day. She again sent him an invitation by the hands of Baigent, and received a characteristic letter from her "cousing":

"My dear Cousing Kate,—I am very sorry i am not able to come and see you before i go. my head is so bad that i am not fit to come. Mr. Baigent is very much annoyed about it, but i am coming here to spend a fue day at the end of the week, and i shall then have the pleasure of meeting you again. You will excuse me for not coming has it will only be for a fue day before i am with you. I have an invitasion from Mr. Hopkins to spend a fue day with him so i shall be down about Thursday. Give my regard to Cousing William and G. I shall soon be down again and have the pleasure of a hunt with my old friend George. With best regards my dear Cousin to you and your family.—I remain, your affectionate Cousin, "R. C. Tichborne."

What animal the monster, who was well over twenty stone in weight and large for his weight, imagined he was going to ride when he had the "pleasure of a hunt with his old friend George" we leave our readers to determine. The letter convinced Mrs. Greenwood that The Claimant was not only an impostor but that he was a very illiterate one. She possessed a letter of the real Simon Pure, written under almost similar circumstances, which differed in every way from the crude production of the ex-butcher. It is too long to quote, but as a sample of the language contained therein we may give the passage:

"I shall be obliged to go to Paris at the beginning of the week, where I shall remain, in all probability, till about a week or ten days before I embark for South America. My time is in consequence so much taken up with one thing and another that it will be, I regret to say, impossible for me to leave Upton this week."

The acknowledgment of The Claimant by Lady Tichborne was a great point gained, but Mr. Hopkins, who had become unofficial adviser to The Claimant, saw that unless some member of the family besides the dowager recognised Roger as the original Roger, the case was a weak one, for it was generally believed that the dowager suffered from delusions. To obtain the adherence of one of the family was, therefore, the next move in the game. The Claimant was staying with Hopkins when the latter suggested that he should write to one of his half uncles inviting him to come down to see him. Castro seems to have had a passion for letter-writing, and at once sent Mr. Henry Danby Seymour one of his famous holographs. Seymour was his half uncle, but the relationship had by common consent been dropped; when, therefore, he received a letter reminding him of the fault of his father, which he was most anxious to forget, he was at once prejudiced against the claims of "Sir Roger Tichborne." The rest of the letter, illiterate and vulgar, disgusted him, and he felt inclined to refuse, especially as there was an allusion to Roger having once been asked to stand for the very constituency which Mr. Seymour represented, an incident which had never taken place. Such difficulty, however, had the family experienced in their attempt to get into touch with The Claimant that he swallowed his anger and accepted the invitation. Without giving notice he took down with him a man named Burden, who had been valet to Roger's father, hoping that The Claimant might recognise him.

At the very opening of the interview Mr. Hopkins made a fatal mistake, for he actually introduced Roger to Henry Seymour, the friend of his youth, as if they had been strangers. Rather disconcerted at this, Seymour turned to The Claimant, and, pointing to Burden, said: "If you really are Roger Tichborne you will know who this is." The Claimant looked at the man for a moment and then delivered his verdict, "It is Uncle Nangle." Nangle was well over seventy years of age, Burden only about forty.

The helmet which Roger had worn when in the Carabineers was then produced, and The Claimant tried to put it on, but it was found to be too small, and it was only when a thick lining of newspaper had been removed that he was able to squeeze it on to his head. But a final test

was to be applied. Burden showed him an envelope addressed to himself, and asked him if he knew the handwriting. For a few minutes The Claimant studied the paper and then said that he had never seen it in his life before. At that moment Hopkins looked over his shoulder and exclaimed: "Good God, that is your father's handwriting!"

After this Mr. Seymour felt bound to tell Castro that he could not recognise him as Roger Tichborne, but was willing that he should come and see some more of the Seymour side of the family to see if they could acknowledge him, and for this purpose an appointment was made for the party to meet in Upper Grosvenor Street. The details of the Seymour family had not yet been studied by "Sir Roger," and he did not feel equal to the ordeal; however, he promised to go, and, of course, did not keep the appointment. In a letter to the dowager, The Claimant describes his meeting with Mr. Seymour. He says that at first his half uncle would not recognise him, but that eventually he was convinced of his identity; he also remarks that his helmet fitted him as well as it ever did, which is not unlikely.

Holmes was indefatigable in his attempts to obtain recognition for his client; the country was scoured to find any persons who might have known the real Roger, and as soon as the faintest sign of acknowledgment was shown out came the note-book, and memos were made from which affidavits were drawn up and sworn to. Unfortunately, however, The Claimant made some very bad mistakes himself, which rather discounted the work of his lawyer. For instance, when introduced to Mrs. Radcliffe, from whom he was supposed to have parted heartbroken when he left England, he did not know her at all, and addressed her as Lucy, while he mistook a Mrs. Townley for the Kate Doughty of his army days. Still many people did believe that he was really the long-lost baronet, and one of these, Mr. Bulpett, the banker, of Alresford, went to the practical length of placing £500 to The Claimant's credit.

One point cannot help striking one, and that is the strange progression which the return of Roger's memory took. He started with the mere name, then on meeting Bogle he added a few family reminiscences and the names of several relatives; his first visit to Tichborne (as Mr. Taylor) added a little local colour, to which the dowager added from time to time in her conversations with her son. The army remained a sealed book for a considerable time until one of Roger's old soldier servants, named Carter, was imported into the household. From his acquisition was dated the recognition of The Claimant by several officers of the Carabineers and the consequent strengthening of his case.

After about six months' affidavit-hunting, Mr. Holmes thought that he was ready to fight the case, and accordingly a Bill was filed in Chancery against the trustees of the two estates of Tichborne and Doughty praying for permission to establish the legal rights of The Claimant to the exclusion of the present holders. In support of this Bill all the affidavits which had been harvested were produced, and a wonderful collection they formed. But the defendants of the infant baronet's title were not satisfied that the question should be fought on paper, as would be the case in a Chancery action. To be able to have the action transferred to the Court of Common Pleas, where it would be fought out before a jury, they demanded, and obtained, an order for the cross-examination of The Claimant before a Master in Chancery.

This examination took place at the Law Institution, before Mr. Roupell, and lasted three days. It was directed more towards finding out what The Claimant did not know than to finding out what he was acquainted with, and it eventually determined the course of action which the defendants took in the case at a later stage. It was at this examination that The Claimant first explained that he had taken the name of Castro when in Australia because he had been on intimate terms with a Mr. Tomas Castro at Melipilla, a little town in Chili.

It will be remembered that, before he went to South America, Roger Tichborne gave a sealed packet to Mr. Gosford, with the contents of which we are familiar. A few weeks prior to his examination The Claimant was confronted with Gosford by Bulpett, at the Grosvenor Hotel, and was asked what the contents of the packet were. He professed ignorance of its very existence, and Gosford was more confirmed than ever in his opinion that The Claimant was an impostor. At the examination, Gosford, who was one of the trustees of the Doughty Estate, was examined concerning the packet by Serjeant Ballantyne, The Claimant's counsel, and admitted that he had destroyed it when he had felt sure of Roger's demise. On

"Good God! that is your father's handwriting."

the following day The Claimant drew up his famous statement of the contents of that packet, and a more cowardly attack on a defenceless woman was never penned.

He wrote:

"The principal items of document said to be destroyed by Gosford. In the event of my Father having possession before my return and also dieing before my return, he (sic) gosford was to act for me, and according to instructions contained in document, in the first place he was to have Upton to live at, and was to manage the whole of the Estate. He was to keep the Home Farm in hand he was to show great kindness to my cousin Kate, and let her have anythink she requires my cousin give me to understand that she was enciente and press me very hard to marry her before I left. I did not believe such was the case nor have I since heard it was so. always believed it was said for to get me to marry her at once to this my father tried to persuade me it also referred to the village of pryor's dean. He Gosford was to have cottages repaired, improved estate in generally. Gosford was also to make arrangements for Kate to leave England if such was true. Both Gosford and wife pressed me very hard to marry her at once other matters of no consequence. I don't think Mrs. Gosford know about Kate.—R. C. TICHBORNE."

One result of the examination was to show Mr. Holmes the necessity for taking his client round to all the places he had visited in his childhood to enable him to refresh his memory, and The Claimant was therefore taken to Brighton, Poole, Colchester, Bath, and Liverpool, always accompanied by Baigent, Rous, or Holmes.

The mention of Melipilla gave Mr. Holmes the idea of getting confirmation of his client's story from that out-of-the-way part of the world, and at his suggestion The Claimant wrote to Tomas Castro, and the letter was translated into Spanish, and despatched. In due course an answer came from Melipilla, saying that many of the people mentioned in The Claimant's letter were still alive and remembered him well, and that one of the ladies had a lock of his hair still preserved.

While this was going on, the defendants were not idle. Dowager's £1,000 a year did not go far. He was compelled in March, 1868, to flee to Boulogne, and had just settled down there when he was recalled by the sudden death of his mother. The Claimant declared that she had been poisoned, but there was not the least trace of poison to be found, and a verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned at the inquest.

With the death of the Dowager Lady Tichborne, The Claimant lost his only means of living, and was compelled to ask for aid from strangers, but, more important than that, he also lost access to the papers which the real Roger had sent home from time to time, for the defendants obtained an order in the Court of Probate restraining The Claimant from touching any of the Dowager's property or personal effects till the two actions in Chancery were settled.

TICHBORNE HOUSE, ALRESFORD.

Inspector Whicher, a well-known detective, who had been employed in the case of Constance Kent, or the "Road Hill Mystery," was engaged to investigate the case on their behalf, and he soon had a story to lay before his patrons. An agent had been despatched to Australia, and the history of Castro soon came to light, for one of his associates mentioned that he had formerly been known as Arthur Orton, and was the son of a butcher in the East End of London. This put Whicher on the track, and he unearthed the whole of the Orton family who were living, with the exception of Arthur, who had disappeared fourteen years previously. He also discovered that a mysterious stranger had been making inquiries on the Christmas Day of 1866, and had shown an accurate acquaintance both with the Orton family and with the neighbourhood. The stranger had been taxed with being Arthur Orton, but had denied it, saying that he was a friend of the family, and wanted to do them a kindness. This stranger was later identified as The Claimant by those who saw him.

The Claimant's mode of living was far from cheap, and he soon began to find himself in difficulties, for the

About this time came more news from Chili. Don Castro wrote, saying that an agent named Cervero Barra had been to Melipilla, and had attempted to prove that the Arthur Orton, whom the good people of that town had known, was the son of a butcher, and was not a member of the aristocracy at all. He also sent the lock of hair, which had been preserved. This news was disquieting, and Holmes wrote again to Castro, asking him if the idea that Orton and Tichborne were the same persons had been given him by Barra, and he received the following reply, which was far from satisfactory:

"In reply to your letter, I have to inform you that Don Cervero Barra is the person who has endeavoured to show that Sir Roger was an impostor; that he had assumed the name in the place of his true Christian and surname of Arthur Orton—having borrowed the same in order to usurp the inheritance—and that he is the son of a butcher and not of a nobleman belonging to the English aristocracy. No one has known here that very Arthur Orton; and although Sir Roger bore that

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER LVII.—(*Continued*).

AS each man entered his cell, he slammed the door as hard as he could to vent his spleen and spite upon it for his day's hard and monotonous toil.

"There's a nice lot of boys in here," murmured Peace; "a set of savages, I fancy. Well, it does not much matter, I suppose, but I wish I was back at Preston."

He had hardly given expression to this wish when he heard a clatter of tin, which at first he could not make out; this was followed by a shouting between the warders below in the hall and those on the landings.

Presently he heard a warder shout out: Peace's door was opened, and a dark-whiskered man peered in.

"Don't you hear me?" he said.

"I heard your voice, sir," said Peace, in a soft and submissive tone. "What do you wish me to do?"

"Humph! You are one of the last batch, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. Only came in to-day."

"Ah, I see. Well, then, put out your broom like that," and here he pointed to the broom at the next cell; "and your tin mug and plate."

"Oh, I didn't know," returned Peace.

"Mind you attend to what I say now you do know, my man."

"Yes, sir."

While the warder was explaining this, the principal in the hall below was shouting to him for his "roll," the number of men he had upon his landing.

This the warder ascertained by running along the landing and counting the brooms.

As soon as the roll is called the brooms should be taken in. It is, to say the truth, not a very dignified way—for a man to put in his appearance by means of a broom—but dignity, or even common civility, is never thought of in the treatment of convicts.

Peace had a pretty good sample of this; not knowing the rules of the place, he left his broom out, a warder came and kicked it so violently that it was a wonder it did not go through the partition.

"This is a lively sort of establishment," murmured Peace, who, after this, kept as quiet as possible. He had made up his mind to conform to the rules and give as little trouble as possible; but at present he was in ignorance as to what these were.

Soon after the broom incident he heard a further noise of opening and shutting of cell doors, till at last his own was flung open, and a little six-ounce loaf of bread was handed him, and he found that his tin mug that he had put outside was filled with gruel.

"My supper, I suppose," he murmured. "Not a sumptuous repast, it is true, but better than nothing."

He sat down on his stool and devoured the dainty meal with something like relish. While he was partaking of his frugal repast all appeared to be quiet in the prison, the reason for this being that the other convicts were similarly occupied.

Both cells on each side of the one occupied by Peace had tenants also. In about half an hour the man in one kept knocking, and wanted Peace to enter into conversation, but as he judged this was against the rules he did not deem it advisable to take any notice of the summons, and so he let the man knock until he was tired, and gave it up as hopeless.

In the other cell he heard every now and then a curious clanking noise which he could not make out. This he took no notice of, for he was determined not to compromise himself in any way, or to incur the displeasure of the officials. At present he was new to the place, and deemed it advisable to play a "safe game," as he termed it.

Warder Dring was a quiet, orderly, unobtrusive man, and, from his general demeanour, many were under the impression that he was as mild as a lamb and as green as a middy; but those under his charge soon found out their mistake when they came playing pranks or trying on the hanky-panky business.

Mr. Dring was down upon them at once. There was no man in Dartmoor Prison better adapted to deal with convicts and command their respect than the old marine.

Peace reckoned up the chief warder with something like accuracy, and he did his best to propitiate him.

When he came his rounds he regarded Peace with a searching glance.

"Ah," he observed, "you are new to the place. Well, here's soap, salt, and cleaning rags."

"Thank you, sir," said Peace, touching his cap.

"You've got a queer pair next to you—I mean in the cells adjoining yours. Have nothing to say to them, and if they make a noise, which I expect they are pretty sure to do, take no notice of them."

"One makes a terrible noise."

"Ah, the prisoner with the manacles—yes, I know. Well, that can't be helped; it's no fault of ours that he is constrained to wear the fetters."

Peace bowed, but did not offer any observation. He had nothing to read, and did not like to ask for a book or two in his present early stage, so he had nothing for it but to sit and listen to the noises that were going on, and there were a few.

As far as the acoustic principle of Dartmoor is concerned it is something very near perfection; indeed, it is aggravatingly resonant. The entire block of four hundred cells in that part of the prison in which Peace was confined were framed in iron.

The consequence was that there was hardly a door slammed in the whole building that did not vibrate more or less throughout the cell. The effect when every cell door in the whole hall was slammed at once is not easy to describe; it was like a volley of musketry.

Peace remembered what Mr. Dring had told him, and being anxious to obey that worthy functionary to the very letter, he watched and listened for the signal "beds down." When he heard the order given he let go his hammock; all the other convicts did the same, and the consequence was that the whole fabric seemed to be shaken.

Soon after "beds down" was sounded a warder was heard coming up the stairs to see that every candle was put out.

At regular intervals throughout the night one of the warders comes round and looks into each cell. By placing the bull's-eye of his lantern against the glass of the window, and peeping through the spy-hole in the door, he can see plainly enough if a man is in bed or not.

Many a time was Peace awoke with the sudden flash of the bull's-eye upon his face.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Giles Chudley had ample funds at his disposal, and he told the sagacious Mr. Slapperton not to spare any expense in preparing his defence and securing the services of a clever counsel to conduct his case when the trial came on. Mr. Slapperton had several interviews with the prisoner after his committal, and in common with many others was at a loss to account for the amount of money he had in his possession.

Some averred that Chudley had rich relations, who had come forward handsomely in the hour of need. He had friends—that is quite certain—but they were not related to him. The reader will remember that at the time of Chudley's capture there were two strangers in the parlour of the

Lord Cornwallis. One was a young swell, the other a broad-shouldered, square-headed man.

The young swell was none other than the boy Alf Purvis, who now assumed all the airs and graces of a fashionable young gentleman, and who, moreover, was one of the most accomplished pickpockets in London. The other, the man with the broad shoulders, was the London "cracksman," who was introduced to the reader when Laura Stanbridge and young Purvis paid a visit to that delectable establishment known as a thieves' haunt in Little Mint Street, Whitechapel.

These two personages had effectually concealed Chudley in various parts of the metropolis after he had committed the murder in Larchgrove Lane.

They had supplied him with funds to go abroad. In point of fact, they were about to see him on board of a vessel at Liverpool, but imprudently chose to pay a visit to the hiring fair.

The result of this act of folly we already know.

Purvis detested the Jamblins, and he, as well as Laura Stanbridge, thought Chudley had done a meritorious act by ridding the world of young Mr. Philip; any way, they befriended his assassin, and supplied him with funds, both before and after his capture.

Mr. Slapperton, after having received the necessary instructions for the wretched man's defence, spoke most confidently of the result of the trial. He told his client that the chances were clearly in his favour, and that in all probability the jury would return a verdict of "Not guilty."

Giles, however, was of a different opinion. He was an ignorant, low-bred ruffian, but he had a certain amount of low cunning, which, to say the truth, is a qualification that most criminals of his type generally possess. However, he put as good a face on the matter as possible, and affected to believe what his solicitor told him

But he was reflective, and thinking of certain plans which he had formed. His low cunning now came out with additional force.

One burning thought was for ever in his brain; it was this:

"How could he effect his escape?"

If he could succeed in doing this, there were those outside who would effectually conceal him from the bloodhounds of the law. As far as this was concerned the prisoner was not far out in his reckoning.

Giles Chudley was bringing all the intellect he had to bear on the one cherished idea which had taken possession of him.

The sessions would come on in about a month. He had that time before him, which he was determined if possible to make use of. In a month there were thirty days, in these thirty days there were seven hundred and twenty hours; a third of the time would be devoted to sleep, to meals, and to times when he could not work. But what of that? There were plenty of hours left for him to accomplish his purpose.

And if all went on well he would accomplish it.

Having come to this resolution, he watched and waited for a brief period, never hinting to a living soul that he had any fear respecting the issue of the forthcoming trial. He assumed an air of cheerfulness and spoke confidently of the result. He said his innocence would be proved, and that he hoped to leave the court without a stain on his character.

He sent a message to the governor, requesting to see him.

The governor was a particularly kindly-disposed man, and was indulgent to a fault. He came at once.

"Do you wish for anything, my man?" he said, addressing himself to the prisoner.

"I'm very dull and doan't know what to do wi' myself," said Chudley. "You were kind enough to say that I might have books and papers."

"I didn't know you took an interest in books or their contents, or that you cared about reading. However, I am glad to find I've misjudged you. You can have what books you require from the circulating library."

"Thank you, sir. How am I to get them?"

"The messenger will fetch whatever you require."

"I shall read a goodish lot o' books," said Chudley, smiling. "Was always fond o' reading."

"Oh, yes; just so—I dare say," remarked the governor carelessly.

"And I can't sit here all by myself wi'out having summut to do."

"Certainly not; besides, they will keep you out of mischief. Idle people are always mischievous."

The governor despatched the messenger to the nearest library, and then left the cell. As he passed along the passage he called the turnkeys before him.

"I can't make out that man," he observed. "What can be his reason for asking for books? Just you keep an eye upon him."

"We are sure to do that, sir; but he don't give much trouble, and seems to make sure of getting off."

"Oh! he does, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"That may be put on. I wouldn't put too much trust in him. I may be mistaken, but I believe him to be a very artful, cunning fellow. I say again, keep your eyes upon No. 9."

The turnkeys promised to do so, but they could not very well see any reason for mistrust or doubt.

At four o'clock Giles Chudley was summoned to chapel, and was ushered into a long line of fellow-prisoners, clad in the uniforms of convicted crime.

It seemed to Chudley that he was the leading object of attraction, for, glancing carelessly round the building, as people usually do when first entering a place of worship, he observed several pairs of eyes accompanying his own in whatsoever direction he turned them, and also that several more were fixed upon him in one long, steadfast glance. He could not help noticing this, at which he felt greatly annoyed. He had not calculated the deep interest men of every denomination take in the actions and demeanour of a murderer.

The glance he had taken at the most noticeable features of the chapel, cursory as it had been, put him in possession of the fact that the windows of the building were only protected by one bar, which fell down the centre, and which left an opening on each side sufficiently large to admit of a slim man squeezing through with time and trouble.

He was in a state of feverish anxiety. He clenched his teeth, and endeavoured to prevent his emotion being perceived by the eyes in the gallery.

But his mind was actively employed, and his whole thoughts were engaged upon his pet project. He was trying to guess first what the chapel windows opened out upon, secondly whether the chapel door was locked at night.

An answer to the first question was soon made by the rattle of carriage-wheels, which he could hear distinctly, and sometimes he fancied he could catch the faint hum of voices and footsteps, which gave him hopes of escape and liberty.

There was not the least question about the chapel being close to the street or some public thoroughfare; if he could only get there he could easily escape. But he had seen that there was a lock on the door—a massive lock which might give him a great deal of trouble and take him hours to pick with such rude instruments as alone he could possibly obtain.

Besides, he was by no means an adept in the manipulation of locks, and this he bitterly regretted; but, nevertheless, he did not despair.

Happening to look on the floor, he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw a good-sized needle there.

It had probably been dropped by one of the female prisoners, who at the regular chapel-hour sat together in a large pew, surrounded by a red curtain, but occupied the seats of the male prisoners when attending the school class which was held in the chapel once a day.

He considered for some little time, not knowing very well how to act. The needle would be of service, and he must obtain it by some means. A few minutes after this he happened to drop his hymn-book. He picked it up again directly, and with it the needle, which he secreted in his shirt-sleeve. As he returned the hymn-book to the ledge of the pew he took care to display the palms of both his hands, that no one might suppose they contained anything besides his book.

No one who knew Giles Chudley would have given him credit for possessing so much acuteness; but the situation in which he found himself called forth the latent powers of his mind, which had heretofore lain dormant.

As the convicts and other prisoners were being marshalled out of chapel Giles blundered against the door, apparently by accident, so that it almost shut.

He took hold of the lock to swing it open again, and in so doing slipped the needle into the keyhole.

"Can't you see your way out?" cried a warder.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir; it was an accident," returned Chudley.

"Forward!—this way!" said the official, and the line of men marched on.

All was well so far. It was evident that the warders did not suspect that anything was amiss.

He could examine the lock the next day as he went out, and if the needle was still there it would be a proof that the door had not been locked. The contrivance was an ingenious one; but then we should remember that men whose lives are at stake have their wits sharpened in a remarkable degree.

Chudley returned to his cell. He opened his books, disfigured them with notes on the margin, much to the disgust of the librarian, and littered them together as if he had been diligently employed with them; but he was too excited to read; he could not even sit or remain still for any length of time; he paced to and fro, thinking and muttering to himself.

By day and by night the same thought haunted him.

At dusk a turnkey came in and lighted his gas. As soon as he heard the key in the lock he sprang to his stool, and was poring over his books before the door was opened.

"It is a most fortunate thing the lock makes such a noise when turned," he murmured. "I do hope they won't oil it."

The whole of that night, and on the following day also, he was cudgelling his brains for some solution to the grand and all-important question.

It seemed almost like wasting precious time, but he knew that it would be folly to begin working with his hands till his plans were matured and his calculations had been fully made.

ADMIRING THE MASTERPIECE OF INDUSTRY AND ART.

The half-hour of evening prayers seemed to be an age. He quivered all over with impatience and anxiety.

There was no help for it; he had to wait patiently. The time having expired, he passed out with the others, as usual. As he did so he thrust his finger into the keyhole. An icy tremor shot through his frame.

The needle was still there!

But much remained to be done. His plan of operations was simple enough in theory, but it had to be put into practice. It would be no very difficult task to turn his bedclothes into a rope, and when this was done he could let himself down from the chapel window.

Upon his return from chapel he found Mr. Slapperton awaiting him.

Giles Chudley assumed an air of confidence which, to say the truth, he was far from feeling. However, he humoured his legal adviser, but said nothing about the scheme he had in his head.

After Mr. Slapperton had left Giles knelt down before the door and scrutinised the lock. After a minute examination of the same he came to the conclusion that it would be easier for him to dig a hole in the wall close to the lock, to wrench the staple away, and then force back the bolt as if it was being unlocked by a key.

He felt assured that this would be the best plan, but as he was rising from his knees he discovered something in the centre of the door which, strangely enough, had entirely escaped his attention before.

There was a small, round grating a little larger than a man's eye; a flap of iron hung before it on the other side.

Giles was astonished, as well he might be, at the discovery, and still more so at it having escaped his notice. While he was staring at it and fingering it with a considerable amount of curiosity, he heard a soft step, so soft that he did not think it was so close to him.

"Someone on the watch," he murmured, as his heart beat audibly.

The flap was gently raised, and its place was taken by a large brown eye, which sternly surveyed the interior of the cell. As if satisfied with the impression it had made, the eye disappeared, and the iron flap descended as noiselessly as it had been raised. Giles Chudley felt relieved when the scrutiny was over.

"Ah, ah," he muttered, "I did not reckon on this, but I am glad I made the discovery. This is a hound that does not bark; I must act with caution."

He resolved to begin work as soon as it was dark, and watched the shadows one by one as they fell through the little window upon the door of the cell. Having matured his plans, he was burning to put them into practice. When once outside the walls of his prison-house he would be safe. So he thought and fondly hoped; but how to get out was the question.

He waited till the turnkeys, who brought the prisoners their suppers of bread and gruel, and lighted their gas, had gone their rounds. He then wrenched off one of the hooks, upon which his bed was suspended at night, and crept cautiously towards the door. He was afraid to begin, for the sounds of voices met his ear, and he judged that some of the

prison officials were about. He was very soon convinced of this, for the voices became more distinct.

He was constrained, therefore, to await for a more favourable opportunity. Deeply mortified at this circumstance, he heaved a deep sigh and sat himself down upon his wooden stool.

He felt supremely wretched, and endured an hour of almost insupportable agony. During this time he stared vacantly at the white flame which flickered from the gas-pipe, and calculated what he should do when he had made his escape. When he heard a clock strike eleven, he sprang from his seat, and grasping the hook with which he hoped to obtain his freedom firmly in his right hand, he again knelt before the door.

Not a sound broke the stillness of the night. He set to work vigorously, and struck the hook into the stone. A cloud of white dust flew from it, he raised his weapon again, when the noise of a footstep fell upon his ear.

He paused and listened. It was a slow, regular step, like that of a sentry on guard. He did not move, but waited patiently till the sound had passed, till it had grown faint, till it had become inaudible.

This was a most unfortunate circumstance. It required all his skill and address to baffle his janitors.

One false step and all his schemes were scattered like leaves before the autumn blast. He felt sick at heart. There was a haze before his eyes, and horrible lights flickering, and strange noises murmuring. Something seemed to be swinging to and fro inside his head like the pendulum of a clock; big drops of perspiration oozed from his temples.

He was now very well assured that the corridor was watched by both day and night, and it was therefore impossible to force the door without running the risk of discovery—it was impossible to enter the chapel without being seen.

He was baffled, and could have cried in the agony of his despair.

He must resort to some other means.

He felt his way back to his seat, and sat there till the grey light of morning shed its cold wan rays into his cell.

The light, ghastly as it was, appeared to inspire him with strength and hope, for he now rose, droye the hook back into the wall, removed the white dust which was scattered on the floor, and, suspending his bed to the hooks on each side of the cell like a hammock, flung himself upon it, and, worn out with watching throughout the livelong night, fell into a sound sleep.

His first night's experience had not inspired him with much hope.

The turnkeys in attendance on him observed nothing remarkable in the demeanour of No. 9.

"He's a queer sort of customer," said one; "one of the oddest chaps I ever came across. I sometimes think he hasn't got his right change."

"Ah! don't run away with that idea," said another turnkey. "He's a jolly sight more artful than people suppose. Keep your eyes well upon him."

It is possible, despite the difficulties and impediments in the way, that Giles Chudley would have succeeded in making his escape had it not been for one circumstance, which proved fatal to him.

It was this.

In the same prison was confined a man who was charged with piracy and murder on the high seas. He was a ruffian of the most pronounced type, and, if report spoke truly, he had committed no end of atrocities. The nautical miscreant was most unquestionably a bad lot.

Upon being brought to the gaol he gave himself all the airs and graces of a West-end swell, and found fault with everything and everybody. He was put into the cell next to the ill-fated Giles Chudley. After being immured in this a few days, he said he wanted to see the governor.

"Well, No. 8, what is the matter now?" said the governor, as he entered. "Anything amiss with this cell?"

"I don't much like it. 'Cos why—I can't get any sleep o' nights."

"Indeed! Not well, I suppose; you had better let the doctor see you."

"I don't want no doctor—I want peace and quietness."

"And I hope you have both."

"No, I ain't. There's some of your men at work in the yard below all the blessed night, and I can't sleep for the noise."

"Eh?" ejaculated the governor. "Indeed—men at work all night; that's contrary to my orders."

"Well, all I know is they are there. All night they are a-scratching and a-scratching, like a lot of big rats."

"I think I know who it is," remarked the governor, in a careless manner. "Just under the window here, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's where it is—the exact spot."

"Ah, the vagabonds, they will work out of hours and disturb people. I'll see and put a stop to them. When do they begin—about dusk?"

"Some little time after nightfall, and they go on till it's light. I never hear it in the daytime."

"I'm glad you have spoken of this, my man. You won't hear it again. If you do, send for me."

"All right, and thank you," returned the pirate.

Seven days had elapsed since the night on which Giles first began putting into practice his plan of escape. On the eighth day the prisoner was still in bed, although it was half-past ten o'clock. He was aroused by the unlocking and opening of his door, but he did not move from his hammock.

He was a little surprised, however, upon beholding the governor, accompanied by two turnkeys, enter the cell. The governor, who, like most governors of prisons, was a retired military officer, twirled his heavy iron-grey moustache, and glanced suspiciously around the cell.

"You are taking it easy," he observed, addressing the prisoner. "Do you not know, sir—and if you do not it is time that you did—that to be in bed at this hour is against the rules and regulations?"

"I know it, sir," said Giles, springing out of his hammock and huddling on his clothes, "but I don't feel at all well, and ha' had very little sleep all night."

"Oh, that I can readily believe," observed the governor, in a tone of sarcasm. "Not well—eh? Perhaps you are over-fatigued."

Chudley was greatly alarmed at this last observation.

"Eh, do you hear, my man?" inquired the governor.

"I don't see how that can be. I ain't had nuffin' to tire me," returned Giles.

"Haven't you? Well, there may be other reasons."

At a signal from their chief the two turnkeys proceeded to search the bedclothes with great care. They also searched the clothes the prisoner had on, and those lying on his stool (for he was but partially dressed).

They found nothing, however, to excite their suspicions.

The governor was evidently disappointed.

"No instrument or weapon of any sort?" he murmured.

"No, sir, nothing. Nor do we miss anything from the cell."

The governor, who had been standing with his arms behind him in a Napoleon-like attitude, appeared to be lost in reflection.

While the examination of the garments had been taking place he watched the countenance of the prisoner with the eyes of a lynx. He had succeeded in intercepting one furtive glance.

"Umph! You miss nothing, eh?" said he.

"No, sir."

"How about the hasp to the window?" The turnkeys looked astonished when they found that it was not in its proper place.

"It must be concealed somewhere, and has been taken away for a specific purpose. What that purpose is we can readily guess."

Giles Chudley felt as if about to faint.

"What have you done with the hasp?" said the governor to the prisoner.

"Me? I ain't seen nuffin' of it; somebody must ha' taken it away afore I came here."

The governor shook his head.

"No, my man," he said, "that story won't do. It is concealed somewhere, I have no doubt."

The turnkeys turned over all the things and made another search, which was as fruitless as the first. Their chief contemplated the window with some curiosity.

"Can't one of you climb up to that?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir, certainly; that's easily managed," returned one, who, addressing his companion, said, "give us a back, Jewett."

The latter obeyed and the other of the turnkeys, who was the lighter of the two, sprang upon his comrade's back and clambered up to the window.

"Search the louvre light!" said the governor, and he looked Giles Chudley hard in the face as he gave this order. At the same time he twisted his moustache with a sort of malicious hilarity.

Chudley's knees knocked together. The turnkey drew forth the hasp, which he held forth triumphantly. It had been chipped at the end, and was covered with dirt. It had evidently been used on the prison stones.

The governor tapped at the wall with his Malacca cane. After two or three minutes' sounding he came upon a part of the wall which yielded to his stick. Both the turnkeys

sprang forward and grabbed at it with their hands. Giles Chudley fell upon his stool, and, covering his face with his hands, groaned aloud.

An opening in the wall was discovered almost large enough to admit a man.

The hole had been pasted over with sheets of white drawing-paper, smeared with prison gruel, which made admirable glue; and these, when powdered over with the white dust of the stone, became not an imitation but a facsimile.

An exclamation of surprise proceeded from the turnkeys and their chief. The three officials could not refrain from admiring the masterpiece of industry and art. They remained for some time examining the aperture in the wall.

Presently the governor turned towards Chudley, who sat on his little stool the very personification of despair, and said in a severe tone:

"With the basest ingratitude for all the kindness shown to you, without the slightest consideration for me, you have striven secretly to effect your escape. Had you succeeded I should have been disgraced and severely censured. You are a worthless fellow."

"I be sorry for what I ha' done, and ask you to forgive me. Liberty is sweet, but it ain't o' no yoose talking about that now," returned Chudley.

"I will take good care another such opportunity is not afforded you. Dogs that bite us when we fondle them must go to dirty kennels and rusty chains. Dixon, you have your orders."

The turnkey touched his cap, and said, "Yes, sir."

The wretched man sat on his stool almost in a state of stupefaction. He had drained the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, and did not appear to care what became of him. The misery that had fallen on him was supreme and overpowering. He was so broken down that he hardly had strength enough to follow his janitors from the cell.

They took him down a flight of steps through a yard. In this yard was a covered building fitted up with little cells.

Chudley heaved a deep-drawn sigh, and passed his hands across his eyes, which were filled with tears. He was forcibly thrust into a low, damp cell, the walls of which were covered with damp, and which emitted a cold, earthy smell, as if it now tasted the sun and fresh air for the first time.

He knew his life in the prison had been one of indulgence and comparative luxury, when contrasted to the poor wretches he had seen in this part of the gaol.

Their infamous dress, their white faces, their servile compliance, had filled him with terror and dismay.

Hope—the last solace of the wretched—seemed to suddenly take wings and fly away. He looked up at the window, which was little less than one great iron bar; he sounded the walls, so thick and strong; he breathed the air of his new cell, and it chilled him to the bone.

The door was shut with a loud bang, the key was turned, and the prisoner was alone.

CHAPTER LIX.

"I suppose you have heard the news, my lord," said Mr. Wrench to Earl Ethalwood, "the prisoner, Chudley, has attempted to escape."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the earl, in a tone of surprise. "No, I have not heard anything about it till this moment; but I hope and trust he was not successful."

"No; it was discovered only just in time. A few hours later and he would in all probability have succeeded."

"Miserable, guilty wretch!" ejaculated the earl. "Give me the full particulars."

Mr. Wrench entered into a detailed description of the events which have been described in the previous chapter. When he had concluded he said:

"It is a pretty convincing proof that the prisoner is guilty, and it will prejudice him in the eyes of the judge and jury."

"Ah, no doubt; but the evidence is conclusive, and cannot lead but to one conclusion. What say you?"

"Yes, it is pretty clear for the matter of that; but one never knows what may take place—juries sometimes take such singular freaks in their heads. From what I have been able to gather, Mr. Slapperton is going to offer evidence to prove an alibi."

"Which he will fail in doing. Take my word for it, Mr. Wrench, this as well as other rumours we have heard have not truth for their basis. The man is guilty enough. Touching this man—the prisoner, Chudley," inquired the earl, "he will be well looked after now, I suppose; more rigid measures will be adopted by the prison authorities?"

"Oh, there is not the least doubt of that, my lord. There will not be the most remote possibility of his effecting his escape."

"And now Mr. Chicknell," said the earl, shortly after Wrench had left, "in dealing with the Larchgrove murder I am actuated by a sense of justice and my duty to the public as a magistrate. There is a private matter which more immediately concerns me—doubtless you will be able to guess what this is."

"You allude to your grand-daughter, I presume," observed the lawyer, in an undertone.

"Precisely—you guess rightly. But the matter rests more specially with the young man she was imprudent and indiscreet enough to marry."

Mr. Chicknell nodded. He thought that was the safest course to adopt, very well knowing to what his client's observations were tending.

"Well, then, to begin with. I, as you already know, have placed my grand-daughter under the charge of an accomplished lady, who has so well instructed her that she is now well versed in all the usages of good society. So much so, indeed, that she is pretty generally acknowledged to be, if not a highly-cultivated, certainly a well-bred young woman."

"No one in the world would attempt to dispute that, my lord."

"This being so, it is desirable that she should never have the chance to return to her husband, or any of his associates. Consequently, a legal separation is an imperative necessity. Have you seen this young Gatliffe?"

"I have, more than once."

"With what result?"

"He seems to me to be perfectly indifferent. He is quite willing to resign all claim to his wife; but, to say the truth, he is so strangely altered, so utterly broken down and apathetic, if I may so term it, that——"

"Well, what? Speak unreservedly, Chicknell."

"That I pitied him."

"Bah!" exclaimed the earl, in a tone of ineffable disgust. "Pity, indeed! Will he consent to a separation?"

"Certainly; he has told me that."

"Aveline has many admirers. It would afford me great pleasure to see her united to some scion of the aristocracy—somebody in her own sphere."

"If she desires to marry again we must obtain a divorce."

"Precisely; that is what I desire."

"Ah! that's another matter," observed the lawyer. "It can only be obtained upon one or more of these pleas—cruelty, adultery, or desertion."

"Well, can't you plead one of these?"

"Yes, but we have to offer sufficient proof, and this we are unable to do, as far as I can see at present."

"Hang it, Chicknell, surely there must be some way of getting over this difficulty?" exclaimed the earl, in a tone of irritation. "It must be done."

"I don't see how. Certainly it would be an unopposed suit. Gatliffe would not offer any objection."

"I will settle a handsome annuity on him for the remainder of his life. Tell him that."

"I have done so."

"And what said he?"

"It is not a money question. Virtually he has given up all claim to his wife, and he is willing to resign her legally, but he will not receive one shilling for so doing."

"I have no belief in the chivalry of a person of his class. You must obtain a divorce at any cost—mind you that."

Mr. Chicknell laughed.

"You are very positive, my lord," he observed. "I suppose you would not like me to manufacture evidence, as it is termed?"

"Certainly not. The end can be obtained by some other means; only I tell you again, Aveline must be released from the tie which is, to say the truth, the very bane of her existence."

"I will consult my partner, and then communicate with your lordship."

"Enough. So let the matter rest for the present. But pray hurry on the matter at as early a day as possible.

"And now, Chicknell, having arranged this business thus far, let us return to the prisoner Chudley. The assizes will soon be on, and the case will be taken as early as possible. You know, I suppose, that Miss Jamblin has been staying with us—the reason for this being change of scene. Aveline is very partial to her, and I think it best that they should be out of the way when the Larchgrove Lane murder case comes before the court; and I have arranged that they should both go to my house in the metropolis, and stay there

till this painful business is over. Chudley will, of course, be convicted."

"I should suppose so, but I will not answer for it, as Wrench says."

"In any case the two young ladies had better be out of the way."

While the foregoing conversation was taking place in the reception-room of the grand old hall, Patty Jamblin and Aveline were in the pleasure grounds.

They had for a companion and protector a Mr. Frank Wrexford, son of Sir Mathew Wrexford, the baronet from whose house Henry Adolphus was coming on the night of the murder.

Patty, pale, silent, and thoughtful, was no longer the sprightly, mirthful girl, who had been the light and life of Stoke Ferry Farm, but she had greatly improved in health and strength since she had been at the Hall.

Young Wrexford, who was an Oxford oarsman, persuaded the young ladies to permit him to give them a row on the lake in the pleasure-grounds of Broxbridge. While plying his oars he kept up an animated conversation, told them a number of amusing anecdotes, and paid marked attention to the earl's grand-daughter, who, however, did not appear to offer him any encouragement.

Aveline, like a true Ethalwood, was proud, and it was not every one she took to.

The boat sped on over the glassy surface of the lake.

"I should like to see you both in better spirits," said Wrexford; "but past events, I suppose——"

"It is hardly worth while, or, indeed, prudent, to refer to past events," cried Aveline. "Let us look to the future."

"Ah! that is always the wisest course. The past is out of your reach, and cannot be recalled; the future may bring us unclouded sunshine, and a recompense for the past."

"I am sure it's very kind of you to take compassion on us poor creatures," observed Miss Jamblin, hardly knowing very well what to say.

"It is a pleasure, an indulgence on your part, to trust yourselves with so poor a waterman as myself," returned the young man; "but say when you would like to go on shore."

The ladies said they were in no hurry, and in about half an hour after this the boat was put in shore. The rower held the prow, and offered his arm to each lady as they alighted. He then left them to pay his respects to the master of Broxbridge.

"He's very nice, isn't he?" said Patty to her companion.

"Pretty well—middling," returned Aveline.

"I do not quite understand all he says," observed Miss Jamblin.

"Oh, you'll understand his fine speeches and metaphors in good time—that is, if you know him long enough. He's well enough, but not altogether my sort."

"Why, what's the matter with him?" inquired the unsophisticated farmer's daughter.

"I don't know that there's anything particular the matter with him, but he's artificial, that's all."

Henry Adolphus now came into the grounds and informed his young mistress that the earl wished to speak to her and Miss Jamblin.

Both young ladies hastened into the hall.

* * * * * * *

The day at length arrived upon which Giles Chudley was to be tried, and there were many who believed he would get off. The court was crowded to excess, and when the prisoner entered the dock those who had known him in an earlier day were astounded at the miserable appearance he presented.

His features were lined, thin, and haggard, and he was but a shadow of his former self. Nevertheless, he strove to bear up bravely under the terrible ordeal. To use a common but expressive phrase, "you might have heard a pin drop" when the counsel for the prosecution rose to open the case. He did so in a fair, impartial, and masterly manner, neither stepping to the right nor the left to dwell unnecessarily on the leading facts either for or against the prisoner.

We need not go over the case again. It will suffice to declare that as it was presented before the judge and jury at the assizes it was much stronger and more compact and complete than when heard before the bench of magistrates. There were two additional witnesses whose testimony corroborated those who had already been heard in respect to the prisoner's identity.

Mr. Slapperton instructed counsel, and he was greatly hurt at the latter not entering more fully into his favourite plea of mistaken identity.

Two men were brought from London as witnesses for the defence. They swore positively that the prisoner was in their company in the metropolis on the night the murder was committed. They were two unprincipled scoundrels who had been produced by Alf Purvis and Laura Stanbridge to perjure themselves in the hope that they might save the prisoner from the dreadful fate that awaited him.

Nobody in court believed one word they said, and their testimony was rather prejudicial than otherwise.

The counsel for the defence, seeing that the question of Chudley's identity was fairly established, had no other course left open to him than to strive, by every means in his power, to reduce the crime to manslaughter.

He argued, therefore, that a quarrel had taken place in the lane between the prisoner and the murdered man; that the latter had struck him several blows with his riding whip (the prisoner's cut lip and the loss of two of his teeth established this fact), and that, after this assault, Chudley caught hold of a hedgestake, with which he defended himself.

This, under all the circumstances, was the best defence that could have been made, and it caused the jury to deliberate one hour and a half before they delivered their verdict. It is possible it would have had the desired effect had it not been for the murdered man's throat being cut. At the expiration of the time already mentioned the jury returned into the box.

Upon being asked by the clerk, "How say you, gentlemen? Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

"We find him guilty," answered the foreman. "Guilty of wilful murder."

"And that is the verdict of you all?"

"It is."

The prisoner was asked if he had anything to say before sentence was passed upon him, when, to the surprise of those assembled in court, he entered into a long, rambling statement, which, to say the truth, was little else than a specimen of ignorance, stupidity, and bigotry.

He said he was not guilty of wilful murder—that a "cunning woman," whom he declared to be a witch, had cast her spells upon him, and that she, and she alone, was answerable for the crime that had been committed. The gist of his argument was that he was bewitched, and was therefore in no way a free agent. He, however, admitted that he had slain his young master, who was, as well as himself, under the spell of the person whom he was pleased to call a witch.

The judge said it was difficult to conceive that at the present period such gross ignorance could exist. He besought the wretched man to prepare for the fate that awaited him, and passed sentence in the usual manner, which Chudley listened to with the utmost composure.

No one had anticipated that he would put forth such a miserable plea in the vain endeavour to cover his guilt.

The wretched criminal, Giles Chudley, during the period which elapsed between his condemnation and execution, was deeply impressed with the awfulness of his position. He was, nevertheless, calm and composed.

The prison officials declared that he was remarkably docile, and exhibited a capacity and eagerness for instruction which was singular in a man of his type. He was visited by his aged mother and sister, and the interview was, as may be readily imagined, of a painful character.

Throughout this terrible trial, however, he preserved his fortitude and resigned demeanour with a singular absence of excitement. The chaplain of the gaol zealously continued his ministrations, and the unhappy man appeared to profit materially. He was communicative to his spiritual adviser, and said that he was perfectly satisfied with the verdict of the jury and the sentence which had been passed upon him.

At the same time, he declared that he should never have committed the crime for which he was about to suffer had it not been for the spell which had been cast upon him by the "cunning woman" who, he declared, was nothing more or less than a witch.

He said he was perfectly assured that he was in her power for months before the commission of the murder, that she it was who caused him to be in Dennett's Lane when Ellen Fulford met his young master.

Before that she had set Peace on to him, and it had always been a matter of surprise to him that she had not caused him to take Peace's life, which he believes he should have done had he not left Broxbridge so suddenly.

The superstition and bigotry of the man was one of his most remarkable characteristics. There were a number of persons who sympathised with the unfortunate, misguided man, and a petition was prepared by the industrious Mr. Slapperton, praying for a respite of the culprit.

As is usual in cases of this description, a goodly array of signatures was attached to the document in question.

It was not, however, deemed advisable to make Chudley acquainted with the efforts which were being made on his

behalf—efforts which, it would perhaps be needless to say were entirely futile.

Shortly after the condemnation of the wretched man, Joe Doughty presented himself at the prison gate with an order from the sheriff to see the prisoner. He was at once conducted into the cell in which Chudley was confined.

"I could not rest without seeing ye," said Joe Doughty. "I want ye to say you bear me no ill-will. What I have done has been done in the cause of justice, an' it warn't no fault o' mine that ye be in your present position. What say ye, Giles? Speak, man!"

"I don't blame you, Joe; I never have done so. It be right that I should be brought to justice, an' ye did nothing more than your duty. I wish, when ye laid hands on me in the parlour of the Lord Cornwallis, that yer grip on my throat had been a little harder. I should have been spared a world of anxiety and misery."

As he spoke he gave his hand to Doughty, and asked:

"How is Nell Fulford?"

"She be broken down, but is better nor what she were—a deal better, I think."

"Ah!" exclaimed the prisoner. "When I saw her a-talkin' to Mr. Philip in Dennett's Lane my heart seemed to be afire, loike, an' my head was all of a whirl. I could see she were a-listnin' and a listnin' to what he were a-sayin'. I could see she had eyes and ears only for him, and this drove me wild, loike. And then—— But you know the rest."

The miserable man covered his face with his hands and heaved several deep sighs which seemed to shake his frame to the very centre.

"Mr. Jamblin, how be he, and Miss Jamblin?" he then asked.

"Ah! they are neither of them much to boast of. The old gentleman is sadly broken. He looks ten years older."

"Does he?"

"Ah, more—a goodish bit more than ten years. Is there any request you have to make—anything you wish me to do for 'ee? I pledge my word to carry out your wishes as far as lies in my power."

"I dunno that I want 'ee to do anything," said the prisoner hesitatingly. "I have done with the world, but still I should loike 'ee to see Nell Fulford and tell her that if I had not loved her so much I shouldn't have been so jealous."

"Oh, it will never do to tell her that, Giles. Better say nothing about it now"

"Well, perhaps you be right. Well, then, ask her to forgive me. An' you may tell her and maister that I ain't so much to blame as people suppose. I never meant any harm to Mr. Philip, and never should ha' dun any harm to him if the witch who had me in her power had not made me go to Dennett's Lane on that fatal night."

He still insisted that he was in the power of an evil counsellor at the time he committed the murder, and this belief he clung to even when he ascended the scaffold.

"Well," said Joe, after a long pause, "ye be goin', let us hope, where there be no warlocks, witches, gnomes, or evil speerits o' any sort, so let that pass."

The two men shook hands cordially, and after a few more words of counsel and consolation Doughty passed out of the cell and returned to Broxbridge.

"WE DO FORGIVE 'EE."

Strange as it may appear, people took an interest in the prisoner, Giles Chudley; and there were many who believed that Her Majesty's prerogative ought to be exercised in his case.

The venerable vicar of Broxbridge, Canon Lenthall, paid a visit to the prisoner, and did his best to bring him to a sense of the great change which awaited him.

The worthy vicar, upon returning to Broxbridge, made the earl, Mr. Jamblin, and his daughter acquainted with the mental condition of the wretched man. A day or two after this, the porter of the gaol in which the condemned man was confined, while looking out of his lodge, saw a gentleman and lady crossing the street towards him.

The lady was pale and sad-looking, the gentleman was tall and broad-set, with the ruddy sunburnt face of a man who had spent his life in the country and open air, but his step had lost its elasticity, and lines of sorrow were observable on his features.

The farmer made a formal bow to the porter, whom he

believed to be the governor at the very least, and handed him a sealed letter. The porter said in a careless tone:

"An order from Lord Ethalwood."

He had so great a respect for both that he would have shown them over the gaol, even without an order from Lord Ethalwood or anyone else.

The two strangers were none other than Mr. Jamblin and his daughter. This the reader has doubtless already divined.

They had never been inside the walls of a prison before, and were awestruck as they were shown all the mechanical wonders of the place.

Mr. Jamblin inquired if he could see the condemned man, Giles Chudley.

The head turnkey, who had been expecting this, like a cunning fellow as he was, affected to be surprised. He raised his eyebrows and gave a short cough.

"See the condemned man?" he murmured. "This is not a visiting day; besides, I must have an order from one of the visiting magistrates."

"Lord Ethalwood told me he had given me the order," returned Jamblin.

"Oh, I see," observed the turnkey, looking at the paper. "Yes, he has included it in the visiting order. It's all right, Mr. Jamblin. You can see the prisoner; this way, if you please."

He descended some steps, and the farmer and his daughter followed him.

The prison chaplain came out of the cell as they approached it. The turnkey touched his cap.

"Been to see the prisoner, sir?" said he.

"Yes; he's bigoted and superstitious to the last degree, but he is deeply sensible of the great crime he has committed, and of the change which awaits him."

The chaplain passed on.

"Oh, father, perhaps we had better turn back," cried Patty, in a state of alarm.

"Nay, nay, gell," returned the farmer; "as we have come thus far, we may as well see 'un; it be our only chance, and as he told Joe that he would loike to ha' a last look at us, why, it be our duty to see 'im."

"You need not be afraid, miss," said the turnkey, "he's calm enough now, and is quite resigned."

"Oh, he be—be he?" said Jamblin.

When the farmer and his daughter entered the cell they inhaled a cold mephitic atmosphere like that of a funeral vault; one pale ray of light filtered through the iron bars; faint and solitary as a last hope, it could not illumine the whole of the cell.

They found themselves in the most horrible of twilights—the twilight of a dungeon. When their eyes became accustomed to this sombre light, they beheld a man seated on a rough wooden stool; he was ironed hand and foot; he was frightfully thin, wan, and worn; his eyes wore a hollow, dejected look.

Mr. Jamblin failed to recognise in the miserable prisoner the stalwart ploughman who for years had been in his employ. He shuddered, the change was so awful.

When Giles Chudley recognised the two visitors he gave a start which resembled a spasm.

"We've coom, Giles," began the farmer, in a voice broken by emotion.

"I know it; ye ha' coom to upbraid me," interrupted the prisoner. "Go on; I deserve it, maister. You, too, whom I ha' most injured, be coom, too."

"Not to upbraid ye," observed Patty. "It is not likely we should pay ye a visit to do that."

The felon condemned to death gave the speaker a smile of welcome, and, rising, presented his clumsy seat to her.

She hesitated for a moment, and then sat down.

The turnkey, with the instinctive delicacy of nature's gentlemen, stood as far from them as he could. He would have left had it not been against the prison rules. Duty compelled him to be present—not to obtrude.

There was silence for several minutes; neither of them knew what to say. It was Patty who spoke first. She rose from her seat and drew back to the side of her parent, upon whose shoulder she placed one of her hands as if to support herself. For, to say the truth, the poor girl was deeply moved, and trembled in every limb.

"We have come to you, Giles," said Patty, in a low, sweet, musical voice, "to tell you how sorry we are that you should have brought yourself to this, and we hope that before—before you die—you will try and drive out all malice and hatred towards us from your heart, as we have driven all from ours."

The convict made no reply. He looked intently at the speaker, and then seated himself once more on his stool.

"Ye hear what my daughter ha' bin sayin'," observed the farmer. "What answer ha' ye to mek?"

"You forgive me, then?" said the prisoner, in a low, breathless tone.

"Ay, surely; it ain't loikely we should do otherwise. It be but natural when 'ee's about to leave the world. We do forgive 'ee."

"Yes," said Patty softly, "we forgive you from our hearts."

"Heaven bless you! Heaven bless you!" cried the prisoner, as he wrung their hands with his, which were chained. "I thought you would when I asked Joe to tell you I could not leave the world without asking your forgiveness.

"Ah!" he said, in continuation, "you do not know how bitterly I have been punished for my cowardice and treachery, and this be the consequence," he ejaculated, glancing at his chains.

Patty sighed; the sight was a painful and touching one.

The prisoner went on telling them how he had been in the power of an evil woman, and how he had been driven to desperation on that fatal night, and what miseries he had endured since then. As he gave this recital they closed their eyes that they might not see his face, which was distorted with agony.

"Has your mother paid you a visit?" inquired Patty.

"Yes, she war the first to coom. I ha' seen her," said the culprit in a softened tone.

"I am glad of it," said Patty.

"And do you never pray to be released from these dreams which come from remorse?" said Patty Jamblin.

"It is too late to pray now. My prayers would not be listened to."

"You are mistaken," said the girl. "The prayers of a repentent sinner are always heard and answered."

"Ah, I do not know how to pray!" he muttered. "No one ever taught me that."

"I will teach you," said Patty Jamblin; and she knelt down upon the pointed stones and raised her hands towards the one ray of light which, faint but beautiful, fell like the eye of the Omnipotent upon her upturned face.

Slowly and sullenly the criminal fell upon his knees. The farmer also knelt, and the turnkey bared his head and lowered it, that he might listen to the prayer.

Soft and melodious as the murmurings of distant water the farmer's daughter's voice rose from the depths of that dark cell and pleaded with heaven for the sinner's soul.

Patty ceased, and after this Giles Chudley became an altered man.

After his interview with his master and his daughter he seemed content, and did not appear to have a wish for further visitors.

On Sunday night the condemned man, after being visited by the chaplain, who was unremitting in his attendance on the culprit, was locked up at the usual hour—eight o'clock. He partook of supper, and afterwards had some beer.

He then went off to sleep, and did not wake till he was aroused by the entrance of the chief warder. It was now six o'clock.

Soon after this the governor of the prison entered the cell, and said, "Chudley, the time approaches, and we want you."

"I am ready, sir," returned the prisoner, who was then introduced to Calcraft.

At the sight of the grey-headed man, with dark, malicious-looking eyes, the unhappy wretch trembled.

"Get it all over as quickly as possible!" he whispered to his executioner.

When the prisoner appeared on the scaffold there was a low murmur like the moaning of the sea from the immense crowd assembled in front of and around the gallows. Chudley was deathly pale.

As soon as he felt the hangman's touch Chudley seemed as if about to swoon; he gave utterance to a short prayer, and swayed his hands to and fro in a manner which was piteous to behold. The executioner was agitated and nervous, and it was some little time before he could adjust the noose to his satisfaction.

At length, however, his task was accomplished, and, stepping back a pace, he produced from his pocket a white cap, which he drew over the prisoner's head.

The chaplain repeated, "I am the resurrection and the life," the fatal bolt was withdrawn, and the man fell like a plummet. His struggles were terrible to witness, and it was quite four minutes before they ceased and he could be fairly pronounced to be dead.

(To be continued.)

Christian and surname, he himself communicated to Don José Miguel Valdivieso and to other persons that they were not his own, that he belonged to the English aristocracy, and that in England he had played with the Queen's children."

Towards the end of June, 1868, the defendants obtained the order which they had been asking for. Vice-Chancellor Stuart made an order that the case should be tried before a jury in the Court of Common Pleas. Holmes retaliated at once by issuing a writ against Colonel Lushington, a friend of The Claimant's and the tenant of Tichborne House, demanding possession of the house and estate. Of course, Colonel Lushington did not have to defend the action, but it was taken up for him by the guardians of the infant baronet.

They at once asked for the appointment of a Commission to take evidence in Chili and Australia, so as to avoid

The Tichborne Arms.

the expense of bringing witnesses such long distances, and to this The Claimant could not object. As, after all, the case was one which turned on his identity, The Claimant could not refuse to accompany the Commission and be identified on the spot, and this Holmes urged him to do, and he agreed, sailing for South America with his counsel and one of Holmes's clerks. All went well until the party got to Rio Janeiro, where they were to change for a coasting steamer which would take them to Santiago, when The Claimant said that he had had enough of the sea, and would go overland to Melipilla. To this his counsel consented, and arranged to meet him at Melipilla. The Claimant, however, never reached Melipilla, for his courage failed him, and he returned to England by himself, leaving his counsel and lawyer very much mystified as to his whereabouts. Holmes had been in communication with the Orton family for some little time, and was nearly convinced that Castro and Orton were one and the same person when this fresh proof of his client's imposition reached him, and in disgust he threw up the case, having spent over £5,000 of his own money on it.

The Chilian Commission was held without The Claimant, and it established that only one Englishman had been in Melipilla at the time that Roger Tichborne was in South America, and that Orton was that Englishman.

Two Clients.

MR. SHARPE: "I see that you are advertising that you are about to give up legal practice and wish to sell out?"

Mr. Wilde: "Yes; that's so. Do you want to buy a good practice?"

Mr. Sharpe: "That's just my aim. How many clients have you?"

Mr. Wilde: "I've got two."

Mr. Sharpe: "And do you think, sir, that two mangy old clients constitute a good practice?"

Mr. Wilde: "I'm sure of it. One's a claimant under a disputed will and the other's fighting a Chancery suit. They've lasted me fourteen years, and they're good for another twenty."

THE Widnes Murder.

The Killing of PATRICK TRACEY by his wife, her paramour, PATRICK KEARNS, and HUGH BURNS.

"The hand that mingled in the meal
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel
Meed for his hospitality.'
—SCOTT, "The Massacre of Glencoe."

THE heartless deliberation with which the different details of the murder of Patrick Tracey appeared to have been arranged beforehand stamped it as one of the most cruel and cold-blooded crimes committed during the last quarter of a century. The victim, Patrick Tracey, was a labourer living at 60, Oxford Street, Widnes, and employed at Messrs. Muspratt's Chemical Works as a slack-wheeler. From all accounts, he was a steady man, a good husband, and a kind father, and although considerably older than his wife, they seemed to have lived comfortably enough together. His fellow-labourers at times teased him in a good-natured fashion about keeping "young men lodgers," but his almost invariable reply was that he could place full faith in his wife. The lodgers referred to were two young men named Patrick Kearns and Hugh Burns, the latter having been an inmate of the Traceys' household for over a twelvemonth, with short interruptions. Kearns, on the other hand, had lived uninterruptedly in the house of the deceased for several months.

Besides Tracey, his wife, and the two lodgers, there were two children in the house, one of whom slept with its parents, and the other with Kearns, Burns's bed being in the same apartment as that of the latter, and separated only by a slim partition from that of the Traceys. According to the statements made by the culprits—or, at all events, made by Mrs. Tracey and assented to by the others—the household retired to rest between nine and ten on the night of October 23, 1879, Burns and Kearns going first, and followed in turn by Mrs. Tracey and her husband, the latter of whom was said to have secured the doors. Between two and three o'clock on the following morning, Mrs. Burns, a neighbour living next door, was aroused by Kearns shouting for her in the backyard. Hastily dressing herself, she hurried to the Traceys' house, and found Mrs. Tracey sitting on the stairs in her nightdress, with the youngest child in her arms, and crying out that her "darling was killed." On seeing Mrs. Burns, she said: "Go upstairs and 'regulate' him, and I will pay you well," and on the two women proceeding to the room above Tracey was found on his back in bed, which was bespattered with blood, while it was at once apparent that he had met his death by a shot in the head. In the meantime, Burns and Kearns had hurried off for Dr. O'Keefe, with whom they soon afterwards arrived. A Roman Catholic priest was also summoned, and, acting on the instructions of Dr. O'Keefe, the two lodgers informed the police of what had

occurred. Inspector Barnett, accompanied by some of his men, was promptly on the spot, and to them and Dr. O'Keefe Mrs. Tracey stated that after retiring to rest on the previous night nothing noteworthy occurred until she was awakened by the report of firearms, when she hastily jumped up in bed, but was unable to see anything owing to the smoke and the darkness of the room. According to her own story, she screamed, and knocked at the lodgers' door, when Kearns was the first to appear, after an interval of some minutes, followed shortly afterwards by Burns. Going downstairs, she ordered one of the men to procure a light, when a box in the back kitchen, in which she had £15 sewn up in an old muff, was found to have been broken into and the contents abstracted. Meantime, she called upstairs to her husband, and expressed surprise at his neither appearing nor giving any response; and, on the three proceeding upstairs, they found him dead, and blood flowing from a wound at the back of the ear. In answer to questions by Inspector Barnett, she said the doors were secured, and that entrance must have been effected by men. They were brought before the magistrates next morning, and formal evidence sufficient to justify a remand having been given, the magisterial investigation was adjourned until after the inquest.

The evidence adduced at the inquest was of such a character as to cast grave suspicion on the relations of Mrs. Tracey and Kearns, while the conduct of both male prisoners for some time prior to the murder was shown to have been totally inconsistent with their innocence. Mrs. Tracey, while under examination as a witness, appeared to be frequently overcome by her feelings; but when, to the utter astonishment of the coroner, and in spite of his protestation, the jury included her along with Burns and Kearns in a verdict of wilful murder, she suddenly assumed an outward calmness surprisingly at variance with her former excited condition.

The magisterial investigation which followed was a most protracted one, occupying the greater portion of three days. From the first it was evident that all the prisoners would be committed on the capital charge, every link in the chain of circumstantial evidence showing motive on the part of at

TRACEY WAS FOUND ON HIS BACK IN BED.

the window, the murderer having first broken into and plundered the box, and afterwards gone upstairs and shot her husband as he lay beside her and the child.

Certain circumstances suggested to the experienced eye of Inspector Barnett, however, that such a story could hardly be true. The windows were found covered with dirt and cobwebs in an undisturbed condition, thus showing clearly that ingress could not have been effected in this manner. His suspicions were further strengthened by the casual observation that although Mrs. Tracey said she was lying beside her husband when awakened by the report, neither her nightdress nor that of the child bore the slightest trace of blood; while the place in which they must have been lying, had her story been true, was plentifully besprinkled. Additional confirmation was given to his suspicions by the demeanour of the two lodgers, Kearns remarking that he must be off to work, when the fact was that neither he nor Burns had been in employment for some time, and the hour—about four o'clock—was a most unlikely one to start for work under any circumstances. With the remark that they must first undergo an examination, Inspector Barnett gave orders for the arrest of both least Kearns and the female prisoner being of the most perfect kind; while that connecting both the male prisoners with the purchase of a pistol and ammunition in Widnes a short time before hardly admitted of doubt.

As far as Patrick Kearns and Hugh Burns were concerned, the motive of the crime was little more than the comparatively small and vulgar one of robbery, which revealed a fearful state of recklessness of mind and callousness of disposition on the part of the perpetrators of the deed. In the case of Kearns it is true there may be said to have been also a motive of jealousy, he having been on improper terms of intimacy with the murdered man's wife, who was herself an accomplice to the assassination. In such a depraved person as Kearns was, however, the motive of jealousy may be almost left out of consideration, as to such a coarse nature as his the motive of simple greed was likely to operate not only with greater but with all-absorbing force. In the case of the woman the motive of illicit love may have swayed her more largely, as the evidence showed, not only the extent of her improper intimacy with Kearns, but the systematic manner in which she had endeavoured to secure what to her would be a large sum of money upon the death of her husband, and

this presumably for the purpose of facilitating her union with her paramour after her husband's death.

Insurances upon the murdered man's life were effected in different offices—somewhere about £364 11s. in all—and the woman's persistent efforts to have this sum further increased was another damning fact against them. This, taken in conjunction with the terms on which she stood with Kearns, pointed to a deep-laid plot between them to get rid of Tracey, secure the money for which his life was insured, and in some distant part assume the relations of husband and wife. Burns, it was believed, had consented to fire the fatal shot, on consideration of sharing in the plunder resulting on the realisation of the insurance policies.

The case came on for trial at the Liverpool Spring Assizes, on February 13, 1880, before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. Mr. Heywood, Mr. Mulholland, and Mr. Cooper prosecuted, while Dr. Commins and Mr. Lumb defended the prisoners. Over thirty witnesses were called for the prosecution, and during the trial a declaration voluntarily made by Kearns to Inspector Barnett was read, the effect of which was to accuse Burns, and Burns alone, of the murder. The task of the defending counsel was made more difficult by this declaration, as well as by the peculiar relations in which all the prisoners stood towards each other, almost necessitating the committal of each individual interest to separate hands. An attempt was made on Mrs. Tracey's behalf to release her from the position in which the verdict of the coroner's jury had placed her on the technical ground that she had not been cautioned before giving her evidence; but this objection was quickly disposed of.

It was shown by the statements of several witnesses that at the time Mrs. Tracey represented herself as being in possession of the £15 of which she alleged she had been robbed she was actually borrowing money and running into debt considerably with several tradesmen. Kearns and she were proved to have been on much more affectionate terms than was consistent with her fidelity to her husband, and several pawning transactions effected by the one related to property belonging to the other.

Dr. O'Keefe said that while there was no mark of blood either upon the clothing of Mrs. Tracey or that of the child, a large streak of blood, which must have spurted from the head of the deceased, lay along the bed, and must have marked the clothing of anyone who might have lain there. A Mrs. Fahey said that, whereas she was awakened by the noise of the shot, she heard no sound of knocking at a door or cries of alarm afterwards, such as had been described by Mrs. Tracey.

Different theories were propounded by Dr. Commins for the defence, prominent amongst which were the suggestions that the pistol might have been fired through a window close to Tracey's bed, that the house might have been entered by a key from the outside, or that the murderer might have concealed himself in the house before the inmates retired to rest. Ingenious as were the theories advanced to reconcile the innocence of the prisoners with the evidence of their guilt, his lordship in summing up disposed of them without difficulty. If not in bed, he asked, what fact had Mrs. Tracey to offer for her absence at the moment her husband was shot? If she was lying by his side she must have been more or less sprinkled with blood; and if not in bed, she must have known how the deed was done. There was motive both on the part of Mrs. Tracey and Kearns, though there was none that could be very plausibly suggested on the part of Burns. One hand only could have discharged the pistol, but if Mrs. Tracey stood by and knew it was going to be done, and let them do it, and if the two male prisoners purchased the pistol together and joined in the attack, they were all equally guilty, and there was no distinction legally or morally to be made.

The jury, after an absence of twenty minutes, returned with a verdict of guilty against all three prisoners. His lordship then assumed the black cap, and said:

"Prisoners at the bar, after a patient investigation, and by the most righteous verdict, you have been found guilty of taking the life of a fellow-creature, and taking it cruelly, deliberately, and ruthlessly. Without any quarrel, without any kind of extenuation or excuse, you have murdered a harmless and unoffending man from the basest and the wickedest of all base and wicked motives. For this awful crime it is not I who condemn you: it is the law, whose minister I am, which says you must die. You sent your victim out of this world into another without warning—without one single moment of preparation. The law in its sternest moods is more merciful than you. You will have that time which you denied to your victim. How you may stand now or hereafter before that awful Being, whose creatures we all are, it is not for one of the most sinful to presume to say. This only I will tell you—that as His wisdom is infinite, so His mercy is unspeakable."

His lordship, who was deeply moved, then passed sentence of death in the usual way.

Dr. Commins then said, "As the female prisoner is quick with child, my lord, I ask that the proper legal steps be taken."

His Lordship: "I have reason to know that that is the fact, and proper legal steps will be taken. I need not trouble you to empanel a jury of matrons. I shall act upon my own judgment, and respite judgment."

The prisoners, who betrayed no signs of emotion or surprise when the sentence was passed, were then removed to the cells.

Some time after his condemnation Kearns withdrew the statement I have already alluded to, and declared it to be false, Burns having had no share in the crime. Whilst awaiting execution the two men paid great attention to the ministrations of the Rev. Father Bonté, the Roman Catholic chaplain of Kirkdale Prison. Burns, however, protested his entire innocence of the crime, though he seemed to have no one who took sufficient interest in him to get up a public petition for his reprieve. Beyond the statement of Kearns exculpating Burns, and which was sent to the Home Secretary, no effort was made to obtain a commutation of sentence. The female prisoner having been granted a respite of judgment on account of her condition, the date of her execution was left unfixed. On Tuesday, March 2, 1880, Kearns and Burns were executed at Kirkdale Gaol, near Liverpool. No members of the Press were admitted, the High Sheriff, Mr. William Garnett, of Quernmore Park, Lancaster, only granting orders of admission upon such restrictive conditions as would have deprived the reporter of all discretion and divested the system of reporting itself of that thorough spirit of independence which has given a character to journalism in this country, and the conditions were, therefore, declined by the editors of the leading Liverpool newspapers to whom they were offered.

A somewhat curious incident occurred in connection with the execution which is worthy of record. The High Sheriff was nearly fifteen minutes late, thus causing a delay in the executions, which, at Kirkdale Gaol, almost invariably take place as the clock strikes eight. About three minutes after eight the High Sheriff ran pell-mell to the big door of the prison, and was immediately admitted, apparently in a great flurry, and he was followed about five minutes afterwards by his subordinate, who seemed in a dreadful state of perturbation. This gentleman was good enough to explain to the policeman at the entrance that both the High Sheriff and himself had first gone to Walton Gaol by mistake, and had afterwards suffered the mishap of a breakdown of the vehicle in which they were travelling, owing to which mishap the miserable men awaiting their doom had their torture prolonged fully a quarter of an hour beyond the time anticipated. Eight representatives of the Press were in attendance, but, as I have already said, were not admitted to the execution in consequence of the action of the High Sheriff, who would only consent to their being witnesses of the sad spectacle on conditions with which it was impossible to comply.

At the inquest, which took place at ten o'clock, it was proved that Burns and Kearns were duly executed, Marwood being the executioner. Kearns was given a drop of 8ft. 7½in. and Burns 9ft. 6in.

Dr. Barr, the surgeon of the gaol, said he was present at the execution, and there was no irregularity to complain of in any way. In the case of the two men, Burns and Kearns, death was instantaneous, dislocation of the vertebræ of the neck being the cause, technically speaking, of death. There was no struggling. He saw the bodies of the two culprits taken down and removed to the press-room. He had satisfied himself that death was complete.

The jury then returned a verdict in the usual form—that the men had been executed according to law.

Unkind!

It was quite a standing joke after the unravelling of the Leyton-Camberwell horrors. All the "Owens" and the "Edwards" were unmercifully chaffed, though it must be admitted that the humour was of rather a grim kind.

A likely young man applied at a certain big stores in Camberwell New Road for the job of shop-assistant. The salary he wanted was inquired, his references were discussed, and then came the inevitable question: "Let's see—Edwards you say your name is? You don't want to purchase a small grocery business, I hope, do you?"

Wife Shoots and Burns her Husband Piecemeal.

Mesmerist and Murderess:

"Thy husband is thy lord and thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Taming of the Shrew," Act V., Sc. 2.

THE life of a farmer's wife in Sullivan County, away amid the prairies, is a desperately hard one even under normal circumstances. But when she possesses a "past," a temperament, and a husband such as fell to the lot of Kate Taylor, tragedy, and tragedy at its worst, is inevitable. She was a strange mixture, this Kate Taylor, a grim human document such as her great compatriot, Nathaniel Hawthorne, would have delighted to analyse and expound. Her crime was ghastly, but, as we have already declared, it was inevitable, too.

In a little low, grey cabin, on the slope of a bleak, wind-swept hill, lived Farmer Lafayette Taylor, his wife, and a child of the latter by a man who had wooed her mother and ridden away. There was not another habitation within three miles of the place, and few were the travellers who came that way. It was an abomination of desolation. The wonder seems to be that the women who dwell in the midst of such surroundings do not all go mad. Anyhow, each farmer is supposed to kill two wives.

The Taylor farmstead was one of many of its kind. It was no more lonesome, no more dilapidated, than most County Sullivan farms; but it sheltered an extraordinary woman in the person of Kate Taylor. Her life was, perhaps, no more colourless, nor was it harder, than those of wives in her station; but the brutality of a drunken husband, who continually reminded her of her betrayer, put murder into her heart, and she nursed her wrath to deadly purpose amidst her sterile environment.

The neighbours seem to have followed the lead of dissolute Lafayette Taylor in this respect.

"What!" cried they, consumed with righteous indignation, "he married her knowing all that about her! How could he expect anything but what he got?"

The woman had lived a blameless life every hour since her girlish indiscretion.

All the available data concerning that weird being go to prove that she strove to love, honour, and obey the brute with whom she had linked her fate. Whether or not she failed in her effort, her most relentless censors never accused her of any violation of her marriage vows. If she did not succeed in loving Lafayette Taylor, that besotted wastrel was alone to blame for the failure.

Added to her passion for domestic order, Kate possessed the mesmerist's power. Unimaginative woman though she was, her deep-set black eyes flashed out this secret. These were eyes—nay, are, for she survives—not easy to forget once having gazed into them. They are eyes which arrest and compel attention, and when their owner chooses to fasten them upon you you become conscious of a strange, uncomfortable sensation. If her husband had not been the hopeless dipsomaniac he was he would have hesitated ere he challenged the woman behind those eyes.

Questioned as to the mesmeric gift, she said, "I don't know whether it's hypnotism or mesmerism or what you call it. All I know is that dogs and cows and horses and fish talk to me, and I understand them, and they understand me. I have conversed with them for hours at a time, and they have talked back." This statement may read like the utterance of a mad-woman. But all the medical evidence procurable goes to establish the sanity of Kate Taylor. Her brothers, in her childhood's days, discovered her uncanny influence, because they declared she was better than a dog to scent a trail, and because the fish came at her call.

"All I had to do," continued this tall, determined woman, the unpleasant little lines at the corners of her mouth and eyes showing themselves with unwonted prominence as she spoke, "was to sing to the fish in a low, soft voice, and in a few minutes the creek was full of them."

This murderess of the prairie dug-out frankly confesses that she likes animals better than people. And small wonder, when one recalls the treatment she has endured from two male specimens of the genus homo. Her false lover is in the American army. Her drunken husband is dead—slain by her own hand, under circumstances to be detailed when we have afforded our readers a further glimpse of the character of the woman whom Lafayette Taylor goaded into the crime of which he was the victim.

Interviewed in her cell, Kate Taylor had no word of regret for the act for which she had sacrificed her immortal soul and forfeited her freedom for the rest of her life on earth. The woman thought only of the wrack and ruin which must overtake her hams and jams and pots and pans during her enforced exile from her home on the slope of the bleak, wind-swept hill. It is not easy to imagine that there is much of the fiend in a woman who talks like this:

"Yes, I worked hard and was just beginning to get things round me. I worry a good bit about my things up home. And then, there's my chickens," she sighed pathetically. "Those Plymouth Rocks were laying splendidly when I was compelled to come down here"—"down here" being the Montecello gaol, within whose grim walls she is condemned to pine until death summons her to the Land of Silence.

She misses her hens, her cows, and, most of all, her "dear old dog, 'Shep.'". The only creature whom she does not miss is the man who got home drunk every night and varied his ordinary proceedings whilst in that condition by pursuing his wife and step-child round the farm buildings, grasping with a murderous grip a huge bowie-knife or an axe.

We have intentionally devoted most of our space to "side-lights" upon the character of Kate Taylor, believing that by so doing we shall all the more vividly convey to our readers the extraordinary nature of the crime which she is now expiating. What a theme for the pen of Ibsen is the whole drama whose gruesome dénouement we are approaching! A betrayed maiden, a mesmerist, a slave to the commonplace of domesticity, the grimly patient wife of a brutal dipsomaniac—all these personalities compressed into one woman. Why, anything might happen, the careful student of human nature will admit, from the most side-splitting of comedies to the most horror-striking of tragedies. Here, indeed, are elements for the Evil Genius to conjure with! What a crass idiot Lafayette must have been to ignore the flashing of the angry mesmerist's sloe-black eyes, as he hiccupped his threats or drove the woman and her love-child to seek safety from his violence out into the night on the bleak, wind-swept hill! It is true, determination rather than cruelty was writ upon her sun-kissed face. Her voice was soft and pleasant. But we cannot help thinking that, in the place of Taylor, we should have "seen the red" behind these things.

The conduct or misconduct of Taylor is best summed up in the statement that during the last year of his life he seldom returned to his wife on the same day as that upon which he left her, and whenever he did honour the farmstead with his august presence he was maddened by ardent drink. Here is a word-portrait of the man from the lips of his murderess:

"He would be very angry when he came home drunk, which was nearly always. We would hear him driving into the barn-yard shouting and swearing.

"Then Ida would slip her books away and creep off to bed, so as to be out of the way when he came staggering into the house, and I would jump up and make believe that I had been busy getting his supper. My husband, Mr. Taylor, had such funny notions. It always made him mad

when he got home to find me sewing or knitting. He said that was putting on airs, and he didn't want any 'fine lady' around his place.

"I found that the best way to keep peace in the family was to humour him, and always when he came home he found me getting his supper. Mr. Taylor was one of those kind of men who always wanted his meals prepared regularly whether he was home to eat them or not. I often look back now and wonder why I was so foolish to stand it as long as I did. I might have taken Ida"—(Ida is the fourteen-year-old child of her first passion)—"and run away from him long ago, instead of bearing with him all these years."

Meanwhile Nemesis was stealing, velvet-footed, upon Lafayette Taylor. One dark winter's night, when all was silent within the low, grey cabin on the bleak, wind-swept hill, the farmer came swearing and shouting into the barnyard for the last time. He dashed into the house with its three little low-ceiled rooms and their pitiful attempts at adornment, and straightway set about his usual denunciation of the woman whose past was an open book to him. The end of the woman's endurance was come.

She calmly picked up a revolver from a side table, and, with sure and steady aim, sent Lafayette's soul to perdition. The crime irrevocably committed, the murderess immediately resorted to means to dispose of the loathsome cause of her many weary years of martyrdom. Assisted by the child, whose presence may have been the head and front of Kate's offending in the eyes of the dead man, Mrs. Taylor deliberately proceeded to chop the body to pieces. The fragments she burned in her cooking stove! Is it not almost inconceivable that such a hideously unnatural act should be committable by a woman who was passionately fond of dumb, helpless creatures, with which she communed and over which she exercised the influence of the mesmerist? How bitterly poignant must have been the suffering of this woman, who is now forty years of age, to have nerved her to such a culmination of her misery.

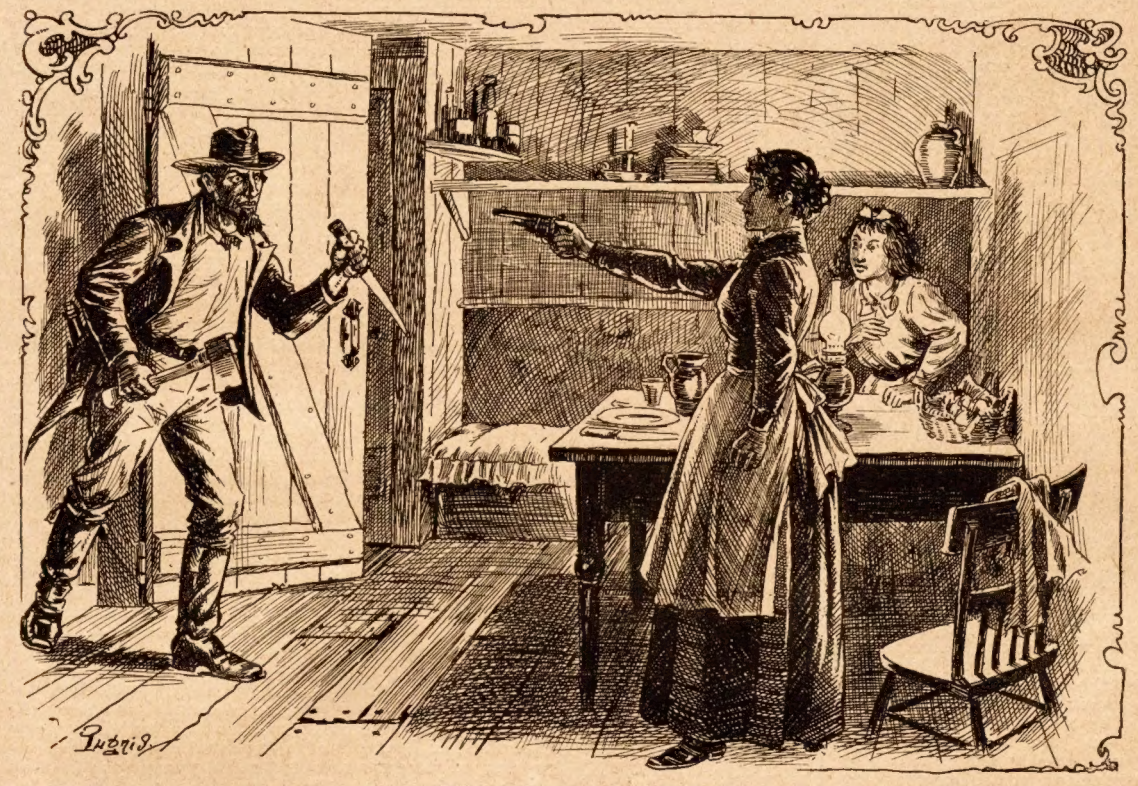
And what of the child, who confesses that she has not shed a tear since she played her part in the horrible deed? This is how she speaks of that night of terrors:

"Yes, it was awful! It was awful! But he—he was awful! Don't ask me if I wasn't terribly frightened, and if it wasn't awful, and all that. It is foolish to ask me such questions. It is also foolish to wonder why I don't go about the house crying and frantic. But I suppose people don't understand or they would not ask such needless questions. No, I haven't shed a tear and I haven't screamed once. Not even when mother—mother—did—it. I have come through more awful things than I did that night. Seeing my stepfather cut to pieces was not nearly so awful as his face was when he was drunk. When one lives among awful things for a long time one gets sort of used to them.

"People say, 'What an awful thing it was to do.' But if they saw it and understood it as I do, they would say, too, 'Why shouldn't she do it?'"

It is pretty clear that Taylor was one of the very worst of bad lots, or he could not have left behind him such a memory as this.

Mrs. Taylor made no bones about confessing her guilt. Strange to say, the police authorities at first declined to believe her self-accusation. As she quaintly puts it:



WITH SURE AND STEADY AIM.

"They ripped up the floor and they tore open my feather tick, and they picked out a big hole in the chimney, hunting for pieces of Mr. Taylor. They wouldn't believe me when I told them that I had burned him every bit up in the cook stove. No, they would not take my word for it. They had to tear up and destroy a poor woman's house just to satisfy themselves that I wasn't a liar. They couldn't rest content until they had spoiled my new rag carpet, and tracked up my kitchen floor with their muddy shoes, and broken some of my blue-sprigged platters that I bought with egg money."

Here is a human problem for the criminologists, the solution of which must exercise the ingenuity of the most expert among them. Had Kate Taylor's destiny been to marry an honest man she would probably have lived and died an ordinary workaday housewife. All that seemed to stand between her and happiness was a drunken brute of a husband. Him she slew relentlessly, deliberately, when she could no longer endure the torture which he daily inflicted upon her.

Thus she became a murderess among murderesses, and now there are none to bewail her fate save her tearless love-child and her dear old dog, "Shep."

Shocking Scene in Singapore Gaol.

BRUTAL MURDER OF
Superintendent DIGBY DENT

Thirty-Nine Slain and Wounded.

"Haste, haste! He lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious Death! should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the pris'ners free."
—HERVEY'S "Meditations."

IT is a good many years ago since I left the Straits Settlements, but I could hardly realise the fact that it was just upon thirty years until I had turned up an old diary and discovered that I had bade a "long and a lasting farewell" to Singapore in 1875, where I had sojourned a few years very jollily, considering all things. The town is not an ideal place in which to spend a lengthened period of one's existence, and if it were not for the constant arrivals of foreign and British ships and the splendid "set"—presuming that you get into that "set," of course—the seaport of Singapore to an ordinary Englishman would not be compared with the Riviera. The great curse to the place is the Chinaman; but, as Johnny puts it, "nobody asked you to come here and share our society," and we have to put up with it. Next to the Chinaman to worry one is the climate, which is not by any means conducive to good health, if you stay throughout all the seasons; and, thirdly, come the alligators and the treacherous waters surrounding the port. Just half a dozen natives and a few Europeans thrown in is the usual weekly roll of those snapped up by these creatures, whilst the hospitals and police-courts are kept very busy, the latter particularly. Johnny Chinaman is a born thief, and there was never a day passed without a batch of these gentlemen being brought before the magistrates. The craze for petty larceny when I was there consisted of the stealing of hats. Indeed, it was not safe to go a mile out of the town, unless you carried a shooter and "kept your eyes skinned." The ruse played by John was to hide behind some trees or in a dark bend of the road, and as you drove past, with his silent shoes he would run behind your vehicle (a kind of low phaeton), and, before you could say "Jack Robinson," or turn your head, off came your hat, and the active tile-lifter would disappear in the darkness.

Those were trifling thefts, however, and created more fun than anger, although the practice of hat-snatching became so frequent that the police issued a special warning. Burglaries, highway robberies, and murders galore were traced to the inhabitants of the Chinese quarter—and such a quarter, too! No European dared enter it unless he were accompanied by the police, and then he would never seek to explore it again, for the stench—ugh!—it lingers in my nostrils still.

Such was Singapore when I left it in 1875; so little wonder that the prison was the principal institute in the town, always well stocked by as miscellaneous a lot of criminals as could be found in the four quarters of the globe, and as interesting a place to visit as Madame Tussaud's, beating the "Room of Horrors" section of that world-famed establishment all to fits.

Indeed, it was one of the show-places of Singapore, and Mr. Digby Dent, the superintendent of prisons, took a pride in showing the privileged ones over the place, for he was very proud of being able to control such a villainous crew without an exhibition of power, but with an iron firmness that held them in check. No liberties could be taken with Mr. Digby Dent, for every prisoner knew that even the slightest irregularity or breach of the rules of the gaol would be met by the severest punishment—loss of food, extra labour, confinement, or the "cat." Such confidence had the superintendent in his power to govern by means of this firmness that (to his cost, as will presently be seen) he thought it unnecessary for the warders and himself to mix with the prisoners armed, save with a heavy walking-stick. Of course, the guards outside and at the gates carried rifles; but Mr. Dent declared that there was no necessity for them to carry firearms inside, as the mere fact of doing so would provoke an outbreak. He was wrong, as I always said, and the details which I shall now give will prove.

It may be interesting, however, to give some particulars as to the internal arrangements of this prison, which will at the same time enable my readers to understand what took place.

Entering by the Victoria Street gate, the visitor finds himself in a passage-way under the engineer's offices, at the rear of which is another gate, with a wicket opening outwards. This gives admission into the workyard, without which is a stationary steam-engine, blacksmith's shop, work-sheds, a large pile of building materials, window-frames, odds and ends of planks, etc. The yard is bounded on the one side by the wall of Stamford Road, on the other by a wall adjoining the premises of the house of the Church of the Good Shepherd. A gate opens out of the back of this workyard into the enclosure where the wards of the native prisoners are located. These wards consist of three or four long buildings, in which are confined usually some 700 prisoners, mostly Chinese, divided according to the grade in which they are classed, as many as 100, or sometimes more, being locked up in one single long room. The lower grade are usually "short-sentence" prisoners, the middle grade and upper grade consisting of "long-sentence" and "life" prisoners, which latter two classes work as artificers.

Besides the confinement wards, this enclosure contains long sheds, under which, seated on the ground, the prisoners take their meals, the allowance for each being placed in a tin pan with a tin mug of water beside it. At meal times the European and native warders invariably stand near them, and the superintendent is usually present, walking up and down the path between the victualling sheds. Another gate from the back of the native wards opens into the enclosure where the European prisoners' ward is located, and a gate at the side toward Brass Bassa Road leads past the gaol offices into the road mentioned, at the point where the European military guard are stationed.

On Saturday, February 13, the prisoners had finished their work and were taking their meal, which they had nearly finished. Mr. Digby Dent, superintendent of prisons, was walking up and down as usual, and the warders all at their stations, each watching the prisoners under his care. Suddenly two of the middle grade Chinese prisoners sprang up from the ground behind one of the warders named Sandford. One stabbed him in the back with a chisel while another aimed a blow at his head with a Chinese hatchet which he had secreted below his waistband. Fortunately, he missed his aim, or the warder's head would have been cloven in two.

Mr. Dent rushed in under the shed to rescue Sandford, when they turned upon him, one stabbing him repeatedly about the back and the body, while the other made a blow with the hatchet, cutting a flesh wound from the shoulder down to the breast.

At that instant a signal was shouted, and fifty or sixty of the worst characters in the gaol—pirates, robbers, and murderers—sprang to their feet and rushed upon the warders, using knives, chisels, hatchets, pointed pieces of iron, and any other weapon they had been able to secrete under their clothing when leaving work. Mr. Dent and the warders were only armed with thick sticks, and they were used to some advantage, whilst the sub-warders, mostly old Indian convicts, fought bravely. But there was no chance against such odds, and Mr. Dent finally received a blow over the head with a chopper. Sandford received fresh wounds, and Warders Burton, Clark, Savage, and Reading were seriously hurt.

All this happened in less time than it takes to tell it, and the prisoners having overcome the warders, made a rush for the gate leading to the workyard. This way out was guarded by an armed native peon, who was quickly knocked down, and the now frantic convicts rushed through pell mell. Everything up to this moment had been comparatively quiet, even the guards not dreaming that an outbreak had taken place, whilst we outside were in blissful ignorance of the bloody scene that was being enacted inside.

The state of affairs, however, was soon to be made public, and by the convicts themselves, too. I happened at the time to be coming down Brass Bassa Street when I heard a fearful series of yells that can for shrillness only be produced from the throat of a Chinaman, and looking in the direction of the prison wall, I saw ten or a dozen Chinese heads peering over the top with such hideous grimaces and terror-stricken expressions that I was forcibly reminded of the grotesque faces that are imported from Japan to this country as "ornaments."

FELL WHILST IN THE ACT OF DEALING THE BLOW.

I was not long in doubt as to what was the matter, for the heads were soon followed by the legs, and then the bodies clothed in the convict dress, the men falling over the wall one after the other into the roadway, and those who had not injured themselves by making the drop, sped off in double quick time. There were few people about, but as I approached the gaol I saw Macdonald, one of the chief warders, rushing along the street, blazing away with a revolver. One fugitive he hit in the thigh, and with a shriek of pain and madness at having been taken, he toppled over into the road, Mac leaving him there, and chasing the others, as I heard the revolver shots in the distance.

In these few minutes the whole place was in the greatest state of excitement, for the yells and reports of firearms, the shrieks of the Chinamen, and the general turmoil within the walls had alarmed the whole of Singapore, and a tremendous mob assembled in a marvellously short space of time.

But what was happening inside? After getting into the yard, the convicts found the gateway leading to what they were fools enough to think liberty, barred from the outside. Then there was a rush for the ladders and scaffold poles to enable the more venturesome to scale the walls, which accounted for the heads I had seen. The ringleaders, however, thought better of it, and determined to take possession of the gaol, if possible. Back they went to the inner yard, having picked up every weapon likely to deal a deadly blow. But now they were met by a few of the guard with their muskets, whilst Mr. Lamb, chief warder, had listened to the entreaties of the European prisoners to be let loose upon the Chinese fiends, and they joined the warders. Two of them—an Englishman named Felton (a soldier who had been sentenced for life for killing a police peon with his belt) and another soldier who was in for a long term—each seized a bayonet and musket from the guards and blazed away in splendid fashion at the astonished convicts, for they little bargained for the warders having a reinforcement from their fellow-prisoners. Felton dashed into the thick of it, and it was afterwards declared that he killed no less than five of the convicts. One thing is quite certain, he and his friend Headly saved Mr. Lamb's life. Two of the most frantic of the Chinamen had him at their mercy—one of them had a sharp axe raised over the warder's head, and in another instant it would have been buried in his skull. Felton shot the man at close quarters through the heart, and he fell whilst in the act of dealing the blow, whilst Headly stuck the other fellow through the belly with his bayonet.

By this time there was any amount of assistance, but to the dismay of everybody the firearms room was locked, and the ammunition box key was missing. It took some ten minutes before the door could be opened and the chest broken in with hatchets, and during this time the mutineers fought like devils, for they knew that the game was up and that it was just as well to die then as afterwards. Besides, their blood was up, and when a Chinaman gets into a frenzied state there is nothing will stop him.

There is little more to tell; the work of slaughter, which lasted quite half an hour, was ended, and the desperate savages were conquered. I saw the inner yard very shortly after the fearful business and shall never forget as long as I live the great sticky pools of blood all over the ground which held the soles of your boots as you walked and produced a sickening sensation, for wherever you trod there was blood. The scene immediately after the cessation of the fight was by all accounts frightful.

It was precisely like an enclosed battlefield, and the dead

and dying lay in heaps, smothered in blood, for the whole place was like a vast shambles. No less than thirty-nine were killed or wounded and some of the latter succumbed, Mr. Digby Dent being one of the first to expire after being removed.

Had it not been for Felton's bravery and that of Headly and the European prisoners, matters would have been considerably worse, and, of course, they received a mitigation of their sentences. Never has there been such excitement in Singapore before or since, and the funeral of Mr. Digby Dent (who was much respected and missed amongst the European "set") was a grand affair, attended by the crews of every foreign and British ship and the 10th regiment from Fort Canning, under Captain Dunlop, together with every European resident.

By an unfortunate coincidence, Sir Andrew Clark was absent on Government business, and it is curious to note that each time that things have gone wrong in the Straits Settlements the Governor has been absent. Of course, the unhappy outbreak in the prison had nothing whatever to do with this circumstance, for the prisoners had evidently been hatching the plot for a considerable time. Many things it proved were inadvisable in the prison regulations. A body of men—Chinamen, too—allowed to converse together indiscriminately was bad enough surely, but the lack of supervision of those who had the use of sharp tools for their work, which allowed them facilities for concealing them, and—last, but certainly not least—the practice of unarmed warders mixing with such convicts, were amongst the items to be seen to. But the last-mentioned, which was fatal to Mr. Digby Dent, must be regarded as the most serious.

Here is a report of the Commission on Prison Discipline, dated January 1, 1872:

> "We recommend that in the Singapore Gaol at least four European warders, besides the superintendent, be employed, and that free native warders be engaged in the proportion of one to every twenty men, and if this number is doubled it will give sufficient for night duty as well. We recommend that these men shall form part of the regular police, wear their uniform, and be armed."

Captain Innes, R.E., Acting Colonial Engineer and Comptroller of Convicts, wrote on May 15, 1872:

> "All warders should be uniformed and armed. I should prefer to give them a pistol in place of the rifle carried by the police."

The trial of the prisoners created the greatest excitement, and when eighteen were sentenced to death there was not a little disagreement as to the carrying out of the sentence. It was argued that the whole eighteen could not have killed Mr. Dent, and that enough life had been already sacrificed without such a wholesale execution. That every man jack of them deserved stringing up there could be no question about, but ultimately only the actual murderers and their immediate accomplices suffered the full penalty, whilst the others were sent back to the very gaol to brood over the bloody scene that had been enacted in the very yard which they were destined to pace for the remainder of their natural lives.

He Got the Verdict.

SOMEWHERE in one of the central States of America a man was on his trial for murder, and this trial provides a most curious example of the miscarriage of justice by extraordinary means. Prisoner's counsel was an Irishman, and the accused was so positively certain of his impending conviction that he promised his legal adviser the sum of a thousand dollars if he managed to get him off with a verdict of manslaughter only. "Shure, and I'll try," replied the barrister; "a thousand dollars it is, as good as in my pocket!" The case took the usual course, and presently the jury retired to consider their verdict; then, much to his astonishment, the prisoner was taken back to the cell from whence he had come, and was kept there until the judge was about to pronounce his sentence. "Prisoner," said he, "the court finds you guilty of the crime of manslaughter, for which we condemn you to five years' penal servitude." "Hooroo!" yelled the convict, waving his hands above his head and retiring in great glee to his nether dungeon, where presently enters to him his counsel, whom he embraced with great fervour, exclaiming, "It's the cheapest thousand I ever spent, for I killed him dead, that's sure!" The lawyer accepted the compliment with a smiling face, and quietly and modestly remarked that the task had not been easy of accomplishment, "For, begad," added he, "they were for acquitting ye, after all!"

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Not a Spinster.

A BARRISTER was examining a witness in a case tried at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, and in the course of his examination said, "I believe you are a spinster, are you not?"

"I'm no more a spinster than you are!" was the angry reply. "I never worked in a mill in my life; I keep house for my father."

He Wanted to Know.

A WOMAN was being examined as a witness at Bow Street, and the prosecuting solicitor said to her: "When you charged the prisoner with the theft, what did he say to you?"

"Ah, you want to know!" answered the witness.

"Really, you must reply to my question," said the lawyer "Did the prisoner say anything?"

"Ah, you want to know!" was again the answer.

"Of course I do, and I insist on your telling me what, if anything, the prisoner said."

"Ah, you want to know!" once more said witness.

"Now, my good woman," said the magistrate very severely, "what did the prisoner say?"

"Ah, you want to know!" once again the witness answered, and at last, when all the officials had begun to get angry, it turned out that "Ah, you want to know!" was what the prisoner said.

A Dumfries Crime.

SOME years ago—the case may be hereafter related in these columns—a shocking murder occurred at Dumfries, N.B. A brute in human form, skulking about the country paths, pounced upon a little girl aged eleven, carried her into a field, and attempted to ravish her. The child made a heroic resistance, and, to stifle her screams, the ruffian half-choked her and then dashed her head to pieces with a large brick. This horrible outrage was witnessed by a woman in a lane which skirted this field, and, in her horror at the spectacle, she shrieked aloud. The murderer made a dash for the hedge, saw that the woman was alone in the lane, and made a furious attack upon her with a view to the safe concealment of the other crime. He nearly killed her, but her screams providentially attracted the attention of some farm-labourers, who surrounded and secured the miscreant, whose trial and execution are alluded to in that important work, "Irving's Annals of Our Time" (1837-1867).

"Breezy" Poetry!

GEORGE BREEZE, the sickly-sentimental, maudlin, ignorant slayer of his friend's wife at Durham—this was the select case in which it was proved that husband, wife, and lodger all lived in the same room and slept in it!—wrote some doggerel which the newspapers called poetry prior to his execution. It was the direst drivel, and we can think of no reason why it was ever made public at all.

It reminded us of the case of John Selhurst, who was hanged at Taunton in 1877 for the murder of his wife. He wrote a sort of poetical confession, as follows:

> "With her a fearful life I led,
> The drink it did so fly to her head;
> On the devil's tipple she used to dote,
> But I cured her with a cut in the throat.
> I wish I could the deed undo,
> And so, dear people, all must you."

These (poetic) lines were published in a Bath and Somerset weekly paper on July 8, 1877.

Replies to Queries

THE SINNER.—Mrs. Weldon addressed a large meeting in St. James's Hall, on the subject of the insanity laws, in January, 1879.

EASTON (Bristol).—The burglary with violence you speak of occurred at your village early in 1865. The four men concerned were convicted.

GEORGE HALL (Blackburn).—A man named Taylor was arrested for the murder and mutilation of the little girl. When Fish was captured, and confessed, a local publican offered Taylor £10 to remain in his house "on show" for a week.

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